

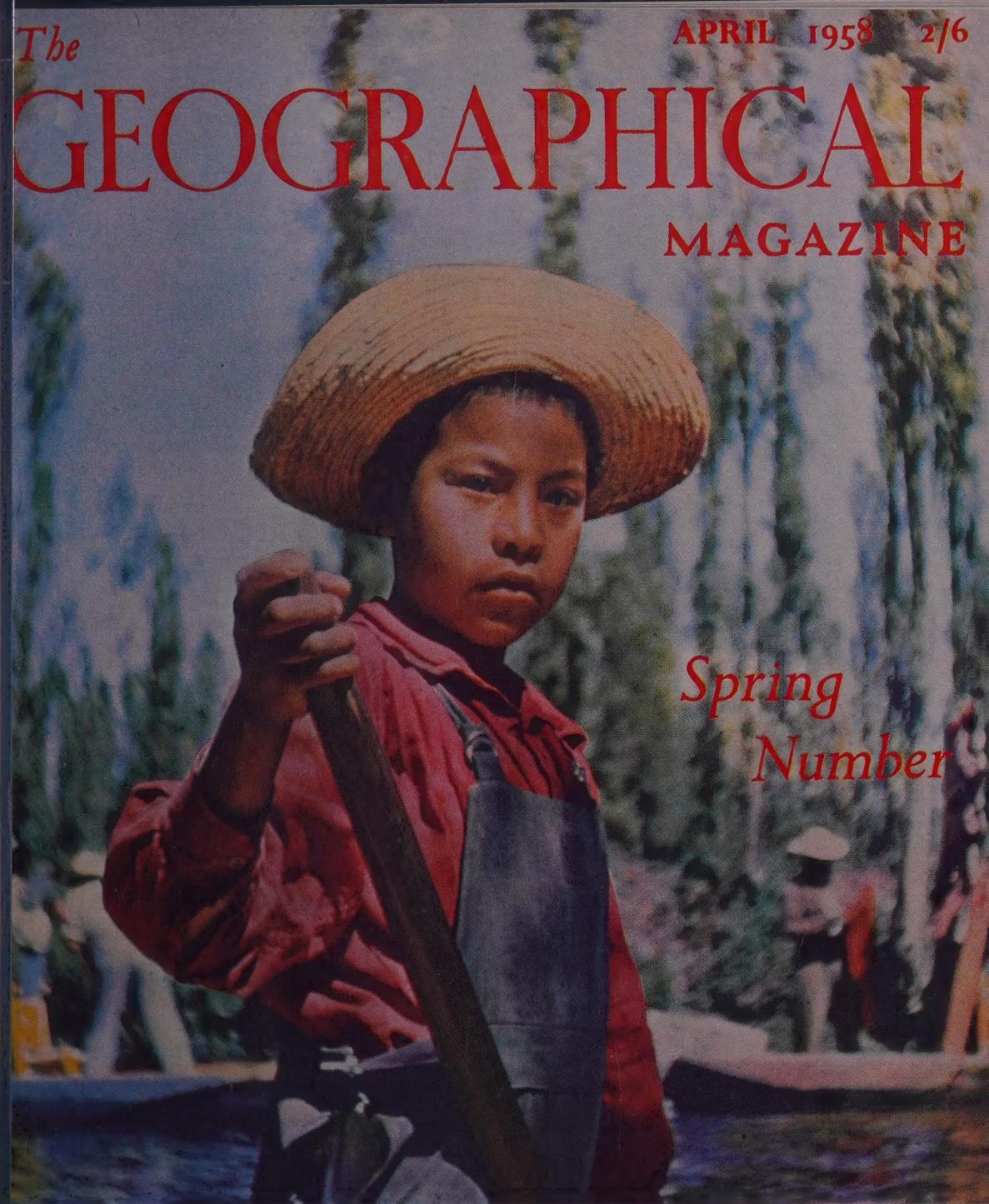
The

APRIL 1958 2/6

# GEOGRAPHICAL

MAGAZINE

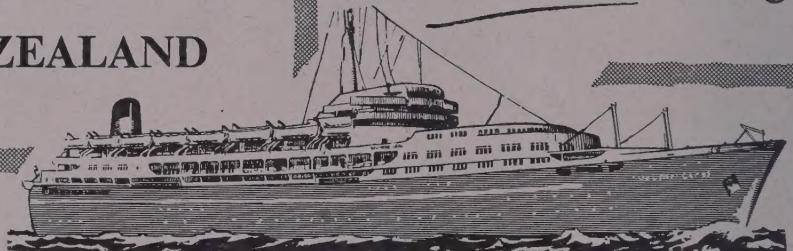
*Spring  
Number*



Easter Passion-Play in Mexico  
Wild Flowers of the Pyrenees  
TWELVE PAGES IN FULL COLOUR

SOUTH AFRICA  
AUSTRALIA  
NEW ZEALAND

and 'Round the World as Well



Travelling Shaw Savill you can go by First Class only or Tourist Class only ships and travel via The Cape or via Panama. And if you want to circle the Globe in one ship, the Tourist Class 'SOUTHERN CROSS' makes four Round-the-World voyages each year.

Passenger Office: 11A LOWER REGENT ST., LONDON,  
S.W.1. Tel.: WHItchall 1485 or apply to local Travel Agent

**SHAW SAVILL  
LINE**



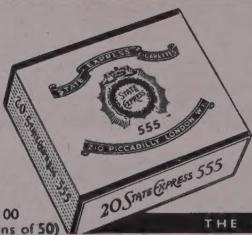
**The Chief Constable  
searched**

his pockets, then accepted my cigarette. "Expensive?" he asked.  
"More than worth a little extra"  
I told him. *You will agree.*



**4'4 for 20**

Also in 10 · 25 · 50 · 100  
(including round airtight tins of 50)



**STATE EXPRESS 555**

*The Best Cigarettes in the World*

THE HOUSE OF STATE EXPRESS, 210 PICCADILLY, LONDON, W.1

# The Yezidi Devil-Worshippers

by FREYA STARK

*Miss Stark began her travels in the Middle East more than thirty years ago and first visited the Yezidis in 1929. Her latest book, Alexander's Path, to be published by John Murray next autumn, marks a further stage in a series recording an "exploration into history", down the ages as well as through Turkish lands, of which the first two were Ionia (1954) and The Lycian Shore (1956)*

It is not quite fair to call them by this name, for, though they propitiate Satan as a powerful angel, they believe our world to be ruled, in its ultimate state, by a beneficent Deity, king over all. His mercy, however, can be taken for granted and is, therefore, of no great account; while the Devil, on the contrary, to whom terrestrial matters are temporarily entrusted, is of a less agreeable position. Every effort to please or placate him is worth while. And when I showed the photographs taken last year in their Sacred Valley to the Monsignor who rules my small Italian town: "They are not so very mistaken either" was his comment, spontaneous if unorthodox.

The valley winds into secluded hills not more than a few hours' drive eastward from Mosul. A new road is being bulldozed over the see-saw ups and downs of Assyria, and will soon reach Ain Sifni, where Noah built his ark in what is now a fair-sized village at the closing of the plain. Its nature is revealed by one of the characteristic tombs, with pointed and fluted cone instead of dome, which show the Yezidi settlements stretching sparse and scattered into Persia on the one hand and Syria on the other.

The hill of Ain Sifni is rather like the prow of a ship, and is the first bulwark of the Kurdish mountains. After climbing it, the car twists into a limestone gorge, narrow, winding and shallow and eaten by its waters; and finally turns north, steeply under trees beside a torrent, into the Sacred Valley of Sheikh 'Adi. When first I came here, twenty-nine years ago, this valley could only be climbed on foot; it is holy ground, the Yezidis walk barefoot when they are in it, and, because of their religion, had

left its timber intact in natural luxuriance. But Progress has now touched them, and enough trees are cut down to allow a rough track for cars to reach a convenient point below the clustering houses and shrines. These can be seen, gleaming white through the leaves, their fluted cones fluttering silken streamers from knobs of brass or from the central knob of gold.

There is a spring festival here, of less importance; but the autumn festival which was now being held is the chief event of the Yezidi year. In the secluded valley the dancing goes on for a week and the people camp on ledges of the hills or come for the day in lorries, and the sound of the drum and pipe drowns the noise of all the little waterfalls around. The people come, sometimes once only in a lifetime, from far away. Trouble and the closure of the Syrian border had limited their numbers, but even so the country around Mosul provided enough to





All photographs by the author

The Yezidis, who propitiate Satan while also believing in an all-powerful but beneficent Deity, live sparsely scattered over the northern part of Iraq and the borders of Syria and Persia. Each autumn they hold their chief festival in the holy valley of Sheikh 'Adi which winds quietly and gently from the limestone ranges that ring the Assyrian plain. The valley's wooded freshness is chiefly due to their religion which forbids the cutting down of trees, although a track has now been made for cars

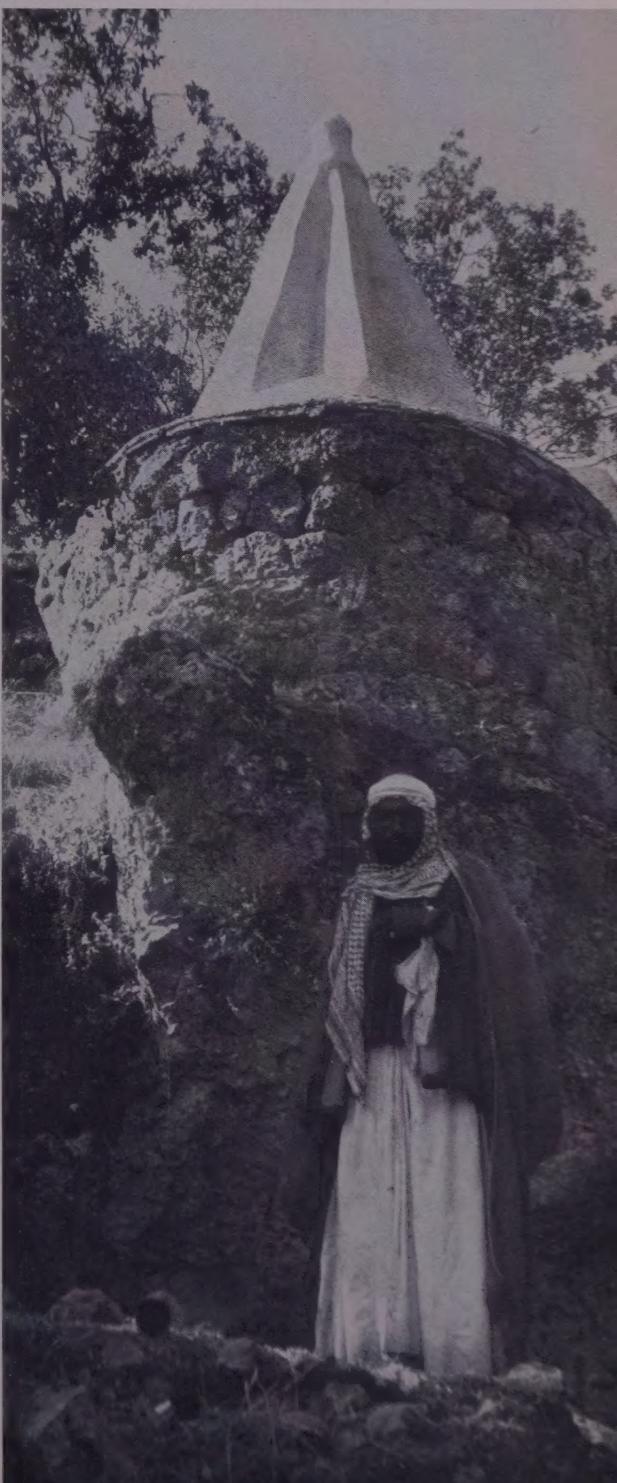
crowd the valley, with the addition of strangers: Kurds in striped goat-wool trousers, baggy and tied round the waist with voluminous sashes, or a Christian or two in city clothes from Mosul, and now and then a tourist like ourselves. A touch of blue in the clothes would show a non-Yezidi, for they avoid this colour, except in blue beads to avert the evil eye. They also abstain from the eating of lettuce—a plant that once sheltered the Devil in hiding—or the naming of his name, or use of any word beginning with the letter *shin*, for Shaitan. All these things one should know if one comes among them; as also that they are exempt from conscription (owing to the fact that the Devil cannot be kept out of barrack-room language, and his name is sacrilege for them to hear).

Their origin is, I believe, unknown. Some nature-worship probably first united them and made the valley sacred, and faiths and superstitions clustered round it—Manichaean with double principles of good and evil; Mithraic, with sun-worship and symbols of sun, moon and planets carved about the valley buildings; the transmigration of souls into animals and men, perhaps from India; the Christian holy names and the temple buildings whose appearance strengthens the tradition of their Christian origin; and the Islamic name of Sheikh 'Adi himself. It seems as if every passing faith or doctrine had left some fragment to flutter here like the rags of their garments tied by the people round their shrines.

Sheikh 'Adi, however, existed historically, and is known to have been a Mohammedan Sufi or mystic, a friend of the more celebrated sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Ghailani of Baghdad. He died somewhere about the year 1163 A.D., and came from Baalbek in Syria, where the famous temple of the Sun-god, then still standing, no doubt shed some ancient unrecognized influence over the faiths that had supplanted it. However this may be, Sheikh 'Adi now lies buried in the Sacred Valley, in a place that is not a village but merely a cluster of holy buildings, with his friends and followers buried around him in the temple or on the hillside under their pointed tombs; and the Snake of Satan, looking very like a Biblical Worm, and repainted at intervals with lamp-black, guards the entrance of the building beyond the holy courtyard, now crowded with barefoot worshippers and the bustle of the feast.

On the open space below, under the widespread branches of sycamores, the dancing went on without a break. The drum and

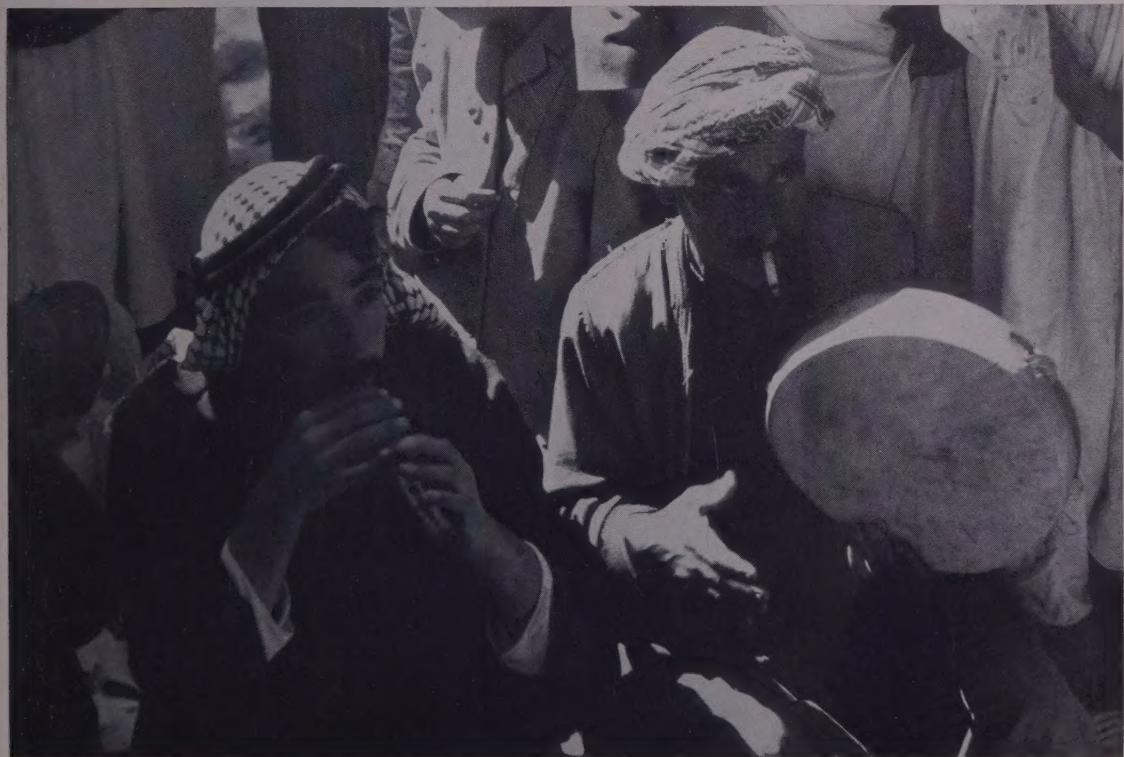
*A tomb of one of Sheikh 'Adi's companions, in the valley. Sheikh 'Adi was a 12th-century Mohammedan mystic : his friends were buried near him. The distinguishing mark of the Yezidi tombs is the segmented cone rising to a point*





(Above and opposite, top) At the autumn festival of the Yezidis dancing continues for a week. The dancers stand in a row, hand in hand, and this is one of the very few feasts of the Middle East where men and women with unveiled faces can be seen together. The flat-topped head-dresses, a mass of shining silver coins, are those of the girls from Sinjar in the western hills. As they perform the 'shoulder dance' they are accompanied by two qawwals, or chanters, who come third in the hierarchy of the priests and are trained to sing words and music transmitted from generation to generation.

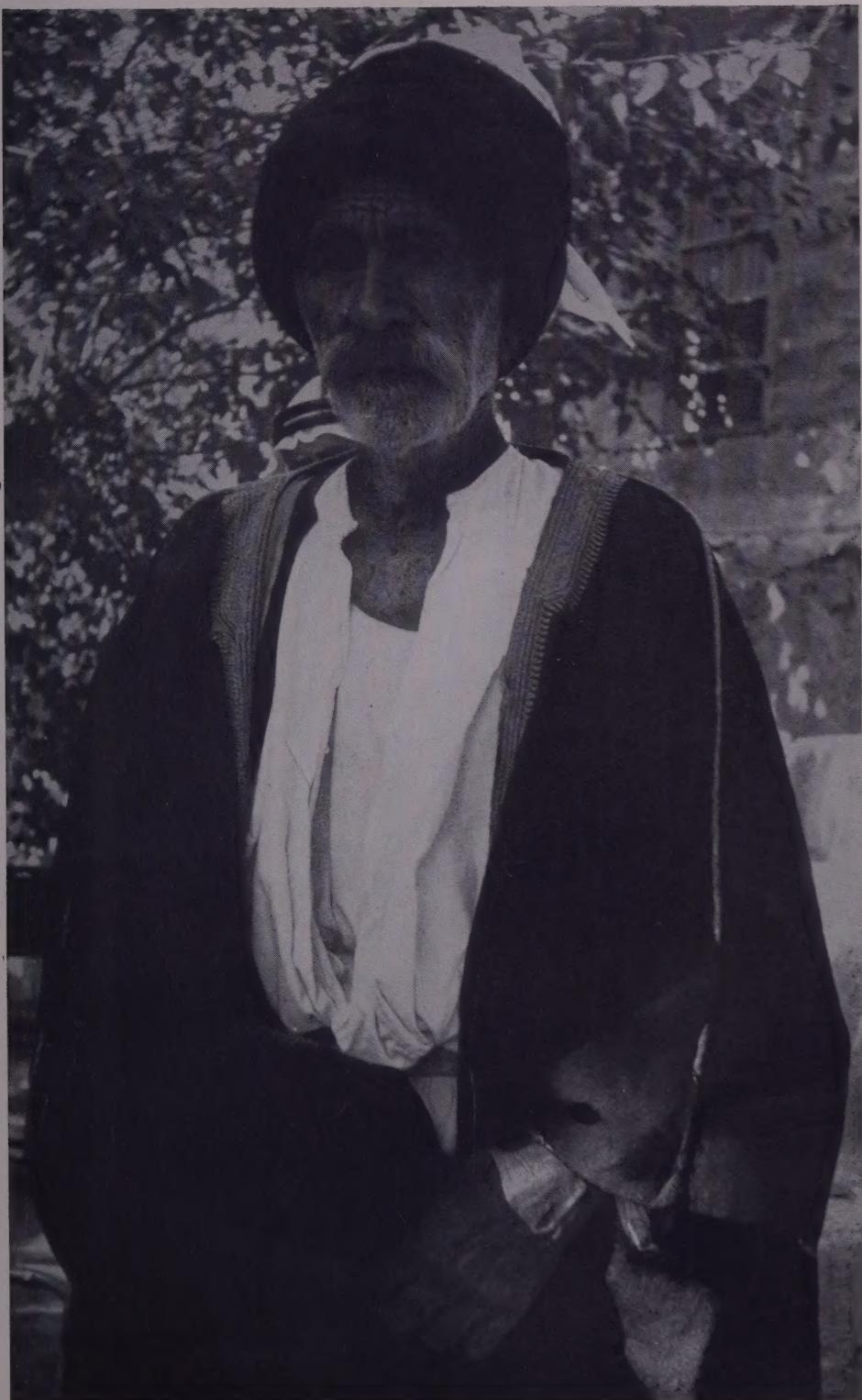
(Opposite, bottom) These two qawwals continued to play their instruments, the pipe and tambourine, without a pause throughout a whole morning, moving steadily from one group of dancers to the next.



(Right) Two young girls from Sinjar, wearing the silver coin-cap of the western Yezidis. They wind a black turban tightly and then decorate it with all the jewels and amulets they possess—apart from what they festoon round their necks. The abbreviated white toga will come in useful later for carrying their babies when they get married. (Below) Among local male head-gear is the white Arab keffieh, worn over pigtails, and the red turban favoured by the men of Sinjar



(Opposite) One of the faqirs or holy men of the Yezidis. Their place in the hierarchy—which is not a high one—is indicated by the conical black head-dress



pipe, *duff* and *shebab*, moved steadily from group to group; and the young people took hands as they approached, and began to rise, men and women together, to the points of their toes and back onto their feet, with a lift and a lowering of the shoulders. It is called, they told me, the shoulder dance, and it was pleasant to see it enjoyed by both sexes, and to look at the unveiled faces of the girls—so rare a sight in these lands.

They all wore some new garment for the feast, a skirt of crimson, or *lamé* from Syria, or velvet bodices sparkling with sequins; and, above them, an overdress to the knees, tied on one shoulder, which many of the northern peoples of Iraq adopt. These made a repetitive pattern, and together with the loose

*While the hour of noon and of the sacrifice is awaited, there is time for gossip under the archways of the holy precincts of Sheikh 'Adi, or for shopping around the pedlars' baskets*



white trousers of the men, falling in folds of drapery very like the Parthian statues recently dug up at Hatra, gave a classic rhythm and dignity to the dancers' line.

One could place everyone exactly by his or her head-dress. The older women, who tend the shrine, wear creamy wool, wimpled under the chin and draped into an enormous turban, with a richly folded dress of the same below it, that makes them infinitely graceful as they move among the younger crowd. The girls from the neighbourhood, or Bāshiqa in the plain, wear a white kerchief over the head; while those from Sinjar in the west have a particular head-dress of silver coins concentrically placed, surrounded by a black rolled turban and decorated with a gold ornament as large and hollow as a coffee-cup, worn over one ear. The men, too, diversify their head-gear, and wear white *keffiehs* in the east and red turbans if they come from Sinjar; or perhaps, if they are poor shepherd lads, a small felt cap like that of a mediaeval page, which shows the six or seven pigtails in which they braid their hair. The holy men in their various ranks all wear a separate head-dress, from the lowest *kocheks*, in white, to the *fajirs* with high black cones, or the *pirs* with black turbans or the *sheikhs*, who are supposed to descend from Sheikh 'Adi's companions (though without the intervention of women); until the hierarchy rises to the Baba Sheikh himself, who was our host—a young and accomplished man, with auburn beard, long gown and jacket of European cut, all spotlessly white. He received and entertained us together with the Iraqi authorities, who came from Mosul; and walked about, attending to our wants, while his thoughts were evidently far away and where they should be, with his people, on this the chief day of their year.

As the hour of noon approached the dancers dwindled away, and so did the little crowds round the pedlars of nuts and sweets and toys with their wares spread on the



*Nuts, raisins, almonds, toys, combs and ornaments have also found their way into these hills of northern Iraq; and there is a continuous stream of people coming and going in the main street leading to the torrent-bed round which the small place spreads rather like a mediaeval monastery*

ground. All drew to where, along a narrow path, the Sacrifice, a little black bull, was to appear. The young men with guns or sticks in their hands had climbed up towards the valley head to fetch him, and all the Yezidis were now gathered along their rough stone terraces to watch his arrival. He came, tossing and plunging among his captors, too tightly held to lower his head to butt; and the women greeted him with their shrill warbles and followed—the whole crowd in tumult together—to a place across the stream which we outsiders could not see. There he was sacrificed, and rifle-shots celebrated the ancient repeated rite; and in a very short time—in pieces on a stretcher with a sheet to cover him—he was carried to the outer precincts to be cooked. The crowd scattered to eat and rest in little groups round their fires on the hillside where, along the narrow slopes by the torrent, the first autumn grass was beginning to appear. Their summer was now over with its fierceness; the October sun shone brightly but gently on the mellowing woods of the valley; and the annual return

of life, the longed-for month of rain, had once more been celebrated in its ancient way.

The Yezidis are at peace now after many persecutions, since the Government of Iraq seems to treat all its minorities with care and justice, and allow them their ways and thoughts in freedom. These people, non-aggressive and industrious, begin here and there to get rich as well. With the new road, the new level of prosperity too will wash like a wave up the valley and the faithful who now come crowded with standing-room only in their ramshackle lorries will soon be lurching round these corners in outsized American cars of their own. And though their bronze peacock, the Sanjak, which the *qawwals*, priests of the third rank, used to carry into Turkey, Palestine and Syria and as far as the borders of Russia and India, in search of revenues, is now held up by the problems of passports at every frontier, and can only circulate within its own national borders, the peace and plenty of Iraq at this moment make up for all.

When the sacrifice was over, we were



(Opposite, top) As noon draws near, the dancing ceases and the crowd collects round the path and rough gateway through which the sacrificial bull is to be led. The young men go to fetch him from the hillside above and lead him down as best they can amid his frightened struggles. They wave their sticks or shoot off their rifles; and in their train (opposite, bottom) the women and the rest of the worshippers (but not the visitors) follow to the appointed place of sacrifice. (Right) Presently they return, with the sacrifice, now slaughtered and cut up and carried under a sheet on a stretcher; and thus the main event of the seven-day feast, apart from the cooking and eating of the sacrifice, is over



invited to a lunch not sacred but substantial, spread in a lower courtyard on the ground. This we all enjoyed, and the authorities from Mosul—far less delighted with Oriental ways than we were and also more impeded because of the dignity of their figures—were made happy by a small table brought along to enable them to eat in Western style. We then visited the shrine, and bared our feet at the threshold of the court, and left our offerings on the stone of the temple itself, beside the black snake. There is a sacredness attached to doorposts, which the faithful stroke or kiss, and to thresholds, which they step over without touching; and though I was careful and remembered as I went in, I carelessly forgot and put my foot on the long stone in departing. This distressed me—for who would wish to be rude to the Devil in his own house?—but the Baba Sheikh smiled away my apology. “We saw that you did not do it intentionally”, said he. In its

interior the place was bare and empty, like an early Mesopotamian church with double nave and heavy solid walls. The tombs of Sheikh 'Adi and of his friend and follower, Sheikh Hasan al Basri, are in chapels at the side, the silk that covered them now falling to pieces with age; beyond, through a door, one could see a long crypt, dark, dripping and gloomy—far more in keeping with our primitive idea of Satan than the peaceful monastic precincts outside. That there was a taboo on this crypt was evident, for we were hastily and anxiously led away from it whenever we approached it. Yet the place has been visited and described, by Layard and Gertrude Bell among others, and by E. S. Drower in recent times. With all of them, it has left its strange atmosphere of peace, an intimacy with the rocks and waters and untroubled shades of its narrow valley, which may well linger in pagan remoteness right through the Age of Oil.

# The Passion-Play of Ixtapalapa

by OSCAR MARCUS

MEXICO is a predominantly Roman Catholic country. Semana Santa (Holy Week) is, therefore, a national holiday. Schools and government offices are closed. Commerce, too, takes a long week-end from the eve of Holy Thursday till the following Monday.

Many Mexican towns and villages stage Passion-Plays, an institution dating back to the days when Spanish conquistadores began converting the native population to the Christian faith. One of the most spectacular Mexican Passion-Plays may be seen at Ixtapalapa, on the Viga Canal near Mexico City. It lies close to the Cerro de la Estrella Hill of the Star, where the Aztecs used to set their boundaries at the start of each year of fifty-two years. Its present inhabitants are their descendants, preserving their ancestors' love of pageantry.

Today Ixtapalapa is an industrial suburb of Mexico City with flourishing factories, many of them subsidiaries of North American and European organizations. Formerly no one did any work during Holy Week, but things have changed, since most of Ixtapalapa's inhabitants earn their livelihood at one or another of the many plants and offices.

Ixtapalapa lies about twelve miles from Mexico City. A good road carries thousands of workers to and from their work in Mexican-made second-class city buses. By our standards these are far from luxurious: Mexicans call them "*carreras*" (lorries). However, they provide cheap government-controlled transportation at the incredibly low fare of about one peso for the fifteen-minute ride. On Good Friday, when the Passion-Play is staged, city mobs by the thousands crowd themselves into these rickety sardine-tins to make a field-day of the big show. Because of this swarming multitude it is impossible to see the whole procession and visitors, natives and tourists alike, have to content themselves with a passing view of the several-miles-long performance from their selected vantage-points.

Many Mexican middle-class people are anxious to practise their English on anyone that looks foreign to them. "Are you going sight-seeing?" enquired a well-dressed passenger waiting like myself, but for a different bus. The few words of English he knew led to some useful information: "Don't be surprised", he counselled in predominantly

Spanish sentences, "if the natives of Ixtapalapa give you the cold shoulder or make hostile remarks. They would treat me just the same because I'm white and don't dress the way they do. Indians of Ixtapalapa are notoriously suspicious of any *extranjero*: anyone in European dress is a foreigner to them; they keep alive their traditional hatred of the Spanish *conquistadores*." Hatred of the "haves" by the "have-nots" may be a more logical explanation of contemporary conditions.

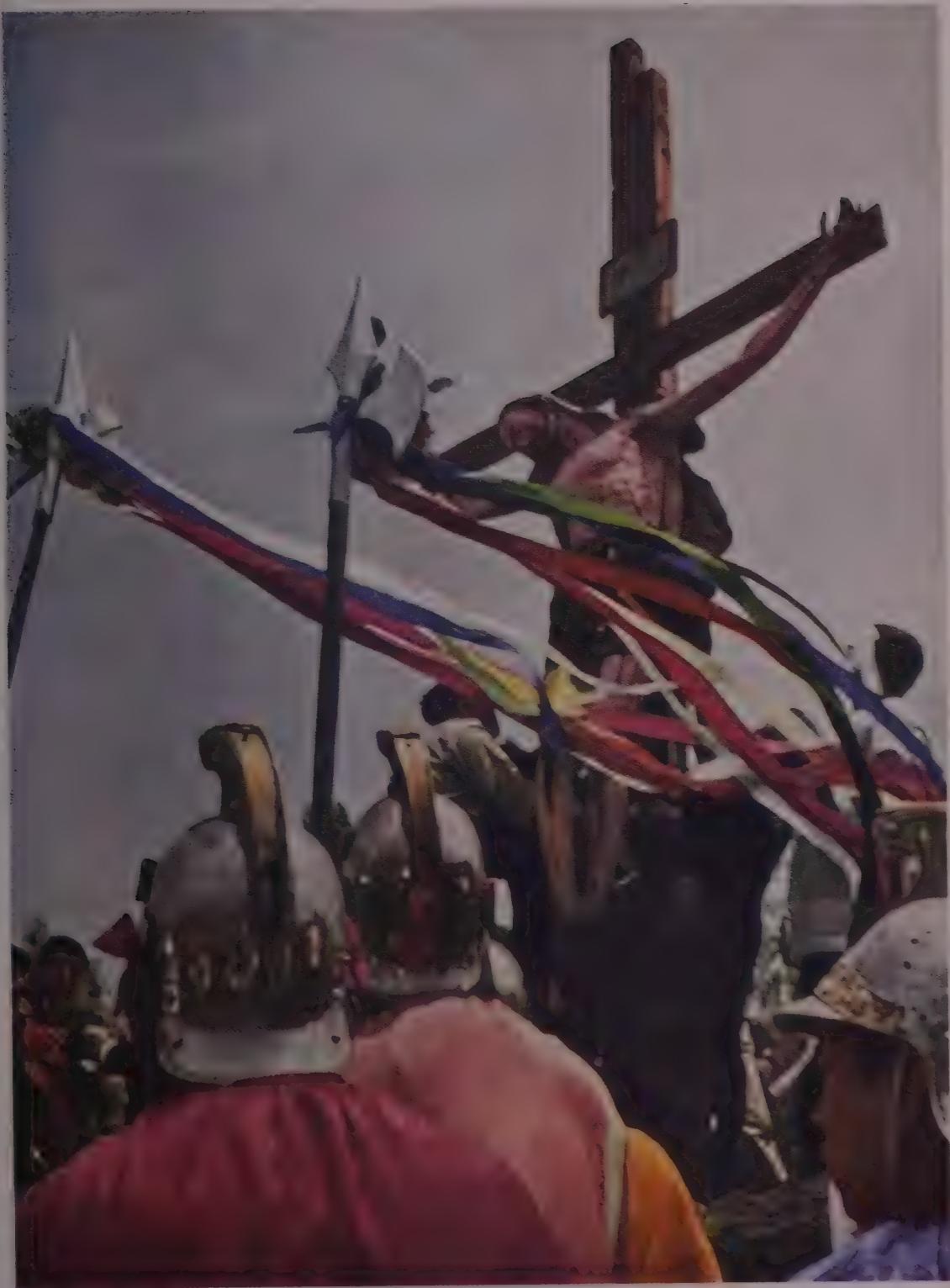
Since Mexican Indians had been hitherto most friendly and helpful towards me during my first few weeks in Mexico, I felt inclined to take such talk with some reserve. Not for long, though. The first Ixtapalapa bus dashed past me, the driver's bitter glance betraying his sentiment: "No extranjero on my bus!" The next caravan was jam-packed with rough-looking characters, among them peddlars and their wares of straw hats, inflated balloons, *panna* (round flat corn-meal cakes), *tacos* (thin rolled ones) and their stuffings of spiced meat and vegetables, and large posters with pictures of Pedro Infante, Mexico's idolized film-star who recently perished in a plane-crash. From the way these people looked at me it was obvious they didn't welcome me in their midst. "This is our bus", they thought, "extranjeros should ride in a taxi!" When I politely asked one

*The Passion-Plays which are a feature of Holy Week in many parts of Mexico combine the love of pageantry which was characteristic of the Aztecs with the devout Christian symbolism instilled by Spanish missionaries since the 16th century. Nowadays Passion-Plays in the more accessible towns and villages tend to become unhealthily commercialized, yet they still retain, for the local inhabitants at least, the meaning and significance that they held for their ancestors. At Ixtapalapa, an industrial suburb on the outskirts of Mexico City, the Passion-Play has degenerated to such an extent that it has suffered the Archbishop's interdict. Nevertheless, as the accompanying photographs show, the religious spirit that inspired it is still clearly felt by the performers and can be caught by the selective eye of the camera. (Opposite) At the last Station of the Cross*



(Below) *The mourners round the Cross. The sincerity of the Mexican Indian performers in the Ixtapalapa Passion-Play is unmistakable.* (Opposite) *The Crucifixion. The actor taking the part of Christ has been replaced by a wooden image*







Above: Roman soldiers among the crowds around the Cross at the Ixtapalapa Passion-Play, which attracts many thousands of spectators from Mexico City. (Below) Flower-crowned penitents in the procession



(in Spanish) where to get off for the start of the Passion-Play he wouldn't even answer and turned his head away. No reply came forth from any of the other tightly packed passengers.

At Ixtapalapa I followed the crowd, which was flowing in all directions except to the parish church where the procession was due to start; so I asked a village policeman. "*Por allá!*" (that way), he pointed. Half-a-mile's inching through massed mobs got me nowhere near the church. I asked another policeman. "*Por allá!*" was all he would say, pointing in some other unlikely direction. By now I had got wise to their tricks and used my own judgement. When I finally reached the vicinity of the church the procession had already left. In any event it would have been futile, if not dangerous, to try and thrust one's way through the uncontrolled masses, as members of the press are wont to do elsewhere. However, since the route of the procession is several miles long and it takes a few hours, I decided to join it at some later point, meanwhile worming my way towards and inside the beautiful old parish church.

The local people come to church in their fiesta dresses, each member of the family carrying something to be blessed—flower-adorned woven palm-branches or bouquets. From the roof of a building they look like moving flower-beds. Nave and chancel are beautifully decorated with greenery and gilded fruit, but altar and saints are shrouded for the days of mourning; the bells are silenced; *matracas* (wooden rattles) are used to announce services.

The ceremonies begin on Holy Thursday with the Last Supper, served in a sacred grotto behind the church. Theatrical costumiers do a brisk rental business, providing suitable gowns, robes, vestments, hats, beards, etc., for the many characters: the Kings and Judges, the Pharisees and Nazarenes, Virgins and Heralds, Barabbas, Judas and Herod, the Centurions and a multiplicity of others. The garments worn have all the colours of the rainbow: purple velvet caps trimmed with gold, yellow, red and aquamarine robes, green hats with multi-coloured feathers, yellow crowns, artificial roses for the horses' heads and tails, rose-coloured blouses with lace, to mention only a few.

The site of the Crucifixion is a hill about a quarter of a mile from the village. In order to reach the site I had to struggle across a dust-shrouded, ploughed-up field and jump over several ditches, just in time to watch the last of the procession's Three Falls. The entire

Passion story is most realistically dramatized. A living "Christ" is led by two Indians in Apache suits who beat him with branches. The living "Christ", however, on approaching the mount of the crucifixion, swiftly disappears into a radio sound-truck, and a wooden image of Christ crucified is hoisted instead.

Thousands of credulous spectators throng past the life-size image to press a pious kiss on one of its knees, while the white priest, a blend of Hyde Park orator and Madison Avenue radio huckster, keeps sermonizing endlessly through a loud-speaker. A sight which tended to spoil this spectacle of faith, enthusiasm and natural ability of the Indian actors was the ubiquity of a newsreel cameraman, attended—like a primadonna—by a train of assistants, rushing around him with flood-lights, reflectors and batteries while he himself wielded a hand-held camera with panoramic screen attachment, delaying the progress of the play and distracting from the climax by his contortions to obtain a worm's-eye view of the rising crucifix.

Until last year's Easter a highlight of the fun and rejoicing, following the Mass of Glory on the Sabbath morn, was the burning of papier-mâché Judases, often life-size and strung across the streets. However, a disastrous explosion the previous March at a Mexico City fireworks factory prompted a swift government ban on the use of any kind of pyrotechnics. As a result of the Archbishopric's appeal for cooperation not one firecracker was heard at last year's fiesta. Surprisingly, nothing unusual takes place in Ixtapalapa on Easter Sunday.

Critical observers from Mexico's Roman Catholic Archbishopric have branded this show a sore exhibition of paganism because of its superstitious garnish, its merry-making and occasional drunken brawls involving some of the leading actors in the Passion-Play. After last year's performance Mexico's Archbishop withdrew his approval of the Ixtapalapa Passion-Play and made a strong effort to get it banned through a number of church-inspired articles in the Mexican press. "What do you propose to do about this?", I asked the dynamic Governor of Mexico's Federal District, Señor Ernesto Uruchurtu. "Nothing whatever!", he replied. "The Church in Mexico cannot meddle with the affairs of government. Do you know our Mexican coins, Mr Marcus?" producing from his pocket a newly minted silver peso. "We mean to practise what's engraved on its edge in capital letters: INDEPENDENCIA Y LIBERTAD."

# The New Generation in Israel

by ZEV KATZ

*Born in Poland, Dr Katz was expelled with his parents to the U.S.S.R. at the time of the German invasion and lived there up to the age of twenty. The family then migrated to Israel and, after graduating at the Hebrew University, Dr Katz came to London University on a research scholarship. He studied at the London School of Economics, obtained a Ph. D., and has just returned to Israel*

In the summer of 1948, during the Israeli-Arab war, I was sitting one evening by a fire in a little wood near Hartuv, in the Judean hills not far from Jerusalem.

"Well Amos, won't you collect some wood for the fire?" said Avner, a driver with a thick black moustache, to a boy with slightly curly fair hair, clad in a pair of simple sandals, short khaki trousers and rather worn open-necked blouse. Without saying a word, Amos turned round and, walking slowly, disappeared into the wood. After about half an hour he emerged from the wood carrying on his back a bunch of dry fuel, almost bigger than himself.

I looked around. Lit by the fire were young, swarthy faces, quite a few with moustaches and beards and white Arab-style scarves (*keffieh*) around their heads and necks. They were cooking strong black coffee in a big pot at the fire and then handing it round mixed with a lot of sugar in the small cups called *finjan*. Avner was telling a Persian "tale without an end" which went on for hours, its heroes becoming involved in ever new and ever more complicated adventures (he did in fact finish this tale, only on another night a week later). Then the company began to sing animated songs about their new-born land and about the girl Bath-sheba, about the *finjan* of coffee and about the Biblical heroes who lived and fought in the same places. Opposite me sat Deborah, a girl with a very young face. She looked at most seventeen, her face was intent, her eyes were strangely lit as she gazed into the fire.

For a moment it seemed to me that as if by a miracle I was suddenly transplanted to a camp of the Israelites preparing for battle two thousand years ago. A sudden bright light of a truck passing on the road nearby dispersed my dream and returned me to reality.

With dawn next morning the long column of our armoured cars formed up on the road. An officer moved along the column inspecting car after car, while the crews stood to attention as he came nearer. I had a close look at

him. It was Amos. He was still wearing his simple open-necked khaki blouse, but on its shoulder-straps there was a green olive-leaf—the field insignia of a captain in the Israeli army. In a business-like manner he inspected our car, checked our machine-guns, said a few words to our driver and moved on. A few minutes later I saw him climbing into the commander's car. He lifted his hand. The column moved off. Two days later he led our column into battle.

One day on an open road in the Negev our armoured column was attacked by Egyptian planes. The column stopped immediately; all our men jumped down from the armoured cars which were full of explosives and ran in search of cover in the barren desert. The planes circled over our heads and their volleys made marks on the sand like drops of rain on water. As I lay in a shallow ditch I saw one of our armoured cars had its door slightly open. Behind the door, observing the circling planes with the expression of a spectator in a circus following some acrobatic feat, sat Deborah. When all was over and we returned to the cars, one of us asked Deborah: "But weren't you frightened? Just think what would have happened if they had hit your car!"

"But why should I be frightened—the Egyptians are bad shots anyhow . . ."

Amos, Deborah and many other members of our regiment were Israeli-born (or more correctly Palestine-born) members of the new Jewish generation.

Again, as I watched a line of Israeli commando troops with blackened faces, grenades hanging round their belts, fully camouflaged with leaves and branches, walking noiselessly into a night-attack on a fortified enemy position, I remembered the young Jewish people whom I knew in the small Polish town in which I was born. How different this Israeli-born Jewish generation is, I reflected. Those others were often pale, weak, nervous, unable (or afraid) to stand up for themselves when attacked. In almost every way the Israeli-born were the opposite.

Do peoples have innate traits of character which do not change with changing conditions and environments, or are these traits mainly a result of such conditions? This question has puzzled thinkers since ancient times. The modern history of the Jewish people, and especially the appearance of a new Israeli-born generation, sheds some light on this problem.

The ancient Jews, as pictured by the Bible and other available historical documents, were a people of shepherds and farmers, tough fighters, proud and freedom-loving, independent in character, devoted to their spiritual values and national and religious traditions. Joshua, Samson, David, the prophets, the Maccabees—these are the figures who are associated in our minds with the ancient Hebrews when they dwelt in the land of Israel.

But by a strange fate the Hebrews were dispersed from their land into every corner of the world. In their dispersion, the people of farmers and shepherds turned mainly into a people of merchants, craftsmen, money-lenders and professional men; the village-dwellers became mainly town-folk. The scattered Jews, especially those in the ghettos of Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia, lost most of their former characteristic traits: the sons of the shepherds of Galilee became afraid of any household animal; the descendants of the Judean farmers knew nothing of the difference between wheat and rye; the sons of the strong, tough and fearless Maccabees, men skilled in battle, were often turned by ghetto conditions into pale, weak, anaemic creatures, lingering in the dark, squalid streets, afraid of their own shadows, though devoted to their faith and unbroken in spirit.

However, in their struggle for survival, the dispersed Jewish people developed fresh qualities: a keen instinct for speedy adjustment to new conditions, an intense intellectual ability, a talent for rapid study of new languages, an ability to make oneself useful and to undertake new occupations and practices, and above all, a sense of mutual help and solidarity with Jewish people in other places and countries. Thus, not being able to live by work on their own land and defend themselves with the sword, the Jews had to live by their adaptability, by their wits, usefulness and solidarity.

As a result of their long and sorry experience in the lands of exile, especially in Russia, Germany and Eastern Europe as a whole, the Jewish people in those countries developed a great desire to return to their ancient home-

land. When the local Arab population saw the first Jewish settlers with the shababim in the ghettos still on their faces, they called them *Ibn al-Mati*—Sons of Death. While the earlier settlers struggled hard to keep alive in the wild, hostile, primitive environment, a new generation of Palestine-born Jews was rising.

What would this new generation be like? The old settlers and Zionist supporters all over the world prayed for a miracle. The country was largely desert, rock and swamp. It needed a tough and hard-working race, stubborn and disciplined, skilled in modern technology and devoted to the land, able to plant the desert, to clear the rocks and dry the swamps—and able to defend the new-born nation from its enemies. The fate of the people of Israel depended on whether the new generation would become such a new race; whether a miracle would, in fact, happen. And it did: the Israeli-born generation is indeed different. The land shaped the generation and the generation adapted itself to the land.

In Israel, the Israeli-born are commonly called *sabras*, from the name of a cactus fruit which, while full of sharp thorns on the outside, contains inside a honey-sweet, delightful fruit. This is because the Israeli-born often appear outwardly rough and harsh-mannered, while inwardly they are endowed with good qualities. Today, about a third of the population of Israel are *sabras*. They are a people apart. After talking quite briefly with a person, you can tell whether he is a *sabra* or not; they speak with a distinctive guttural accent. There is no greater insult to a *sabra* than to suggest that he was not actually born in Israel, so proud are they of this fact. The non-*sabra* children often try to speak with a *sabra* accent and imitate their behaviour, but rarely with success.

The *sabras* keep themselves physically very fit, able to walk long distances in the blazing heat with only a little water; they know how to find their way at night. They are also extremely devoted, disciplined and hard-working, and are especially good farmers.

One summer night I visited a new kibbutz—the name for a collective farm in Israel, based on common ownership and work and common sharing of income by all members. It was on the eastern bank of the Sea of Galilee and was built entirely by *sabras*. This kibbutz, established only a few years ago, had a highly developed farm. I rose at dawn and already saw the tractors working in the fields; the banana-plantations were being watered;

the chicken-farm, the cattle-farm, the workshops, the vegetable-fields—all were humming with activity. Even at that early hour the heat was considerable. The fields of the kibbutz stretched as far as the eye could see. All this had been created within a few years—the fields, the small white houses with mosquito-nets on the doors and windows, the long wooden dining-hall and library, the barns, the farm-buildings: all this in a place which was formerly waste land. The Syrian border positions were just half a mile away on top of the hills. The farmers lived and worked constantly within the range of the Syrian guns. Day and night armed farmers, men and women alike, manned defence positions in order to repel a possible attack; often those working in the fields had to carry weapons. Occasionally infiltrators from the other side penetrated the area of the kibbutz and there were exchanges of fire. One member of the kibbutz was killed, two were wounded.

However, the most wonderful thing about this farm was that the oldest member was twenty-three years old. Daliah, who was my guide, was twenty-one. She told me the story of the kibbutz. The founders came here straight after finishing school. They comprised two groups, one class from Jerusalem and one from Tel-Aviv. They were all members of the scout movement, who volunteered after graduation to establish a communal settlement in some development area, so as to help the country with their toil. Many of them had known each other since childhood; they had studied together and were now working together.

When they first arrived at the place, they went through a difficult time. There was nothing: just a few tents among the hills and rocks—no water, no road, no person or house within sight. The fields below, adjoining the Sea of Galilee, were swampy and mosquito-ridden. At night the mosquitos would bite and the heat inside the tents was intense. In stormy weather the tents would turn over, the alarm would be sounded, all the members would gather their belongings and in the rain and wind carry them into a tent which remained intact. The hands of the youngsters, unused to heavy manual labour, became full of blisters, their backs strained, their feet sore and their heads heavy. Most of them went on working stubbornly. Those who were unable to stand the difficult conditions, or those whose desire to study or find a career got the better of them, left their friends and returned to town. But, to take their places, more volunteers kept arriving. The original group of 32 rose to 70, 100 and up to over 180 mem-

bers. Water was the first necessity and a water-pipe was laid from a brook which was found among the hills. A track was made from the nearest road to the kibbutz and paved with rocks cleared from the fields and a few wooden huts were assembled. An electric generator was installed and a long wooden dining-hall was built. In the evenings the members could now gather in the brightly lit hall for a sing-song, a dance or even a showing of a film. At the same time, the farming economy of the kibbutz developed: the swampy fields below were drained and turned into banana-plantations, the fields higher up were cleared of rocks, wild thorny bushes and snakes. The cattle- and poultry-farms were built. Then the proper living-huts were erected. The kibbutz attained its present shape. Soon the whole kibbutz celebrated its first weddings—three young couples in one day. In the meantime, five other settlements were built in the area, four of them by young people like themselves. Together with the older settlements further away they built a huge amphitheatre overlooking Lake Tiberias. In the amphitheatre concerts, theatrical performances and celebrations take place. Life has become almost luxurious compared with what it was in the beginning.

Except for personal belongings (clothes, etc.), there is no private property in the kibbutz. Everything is owned by the kibbutz as a corporation (the land is leased from the Jewish National Fund for 99 years). Members have their meals in a common dining-hall (at which, however, usually a choice of meals is available); they receive their working-clothes from a common store and order the better clothes in the kibbutz sewing-shop (or from town, through the kibbutz tailor). Members receive pocket-money as well as a certain sum when they go on a holiday. At a general meeting, a Board is elected which governs all the affairs of the kibbutz. Members of the Board have no privileges whatsoever. Most of them do physical work just like other members and gather in the evening to decide on outstanding matters. The result is that usually members do not like to be 'in the government' and carry additional burdens. Power which is so sought after 'outside' holds no special attraction for the young members of the kibbutz. There is no police or court of law in any of the kibbutzim; members do not pay taxes and do not use money as long as they remain 'within'. All outstanding problems between members are settled by a committee or by friends on both sides.

I would not want to paint the life in a



Keren Ha

A number of leading personalities in Israel today are sabras, that is, are Palestine-born. Moshe Dayan, ex-Commander-in-Chief of the Israeli Armed Forces, is one of them. Born into a farmer's family in Nahalal in the Jezreel Valley, he commanded the Israeli Forces during the Sinai Campaign. Dynamic and exacting as a commander but simple and friendly as a man, he symbolizes the new generation. Here he is addressing his soldiers after capturing a position in the Sinai Peninsula



Ben van de Poll, from Daybreak for a Nation (J. A. Boom & Zonen)

Religious orthodoxy and tradition from the lands of exile are not without influence on the younger generation in Israel. This influence is shown most conspicuously in the Yeshiva schools devoted to the study of the Talmud, a collection of works dealing with the traditional laws and ceremonial regulations of the Jewish faith. The broad-brimmed hats worn by the students, and their ringlets, while constituting a mark of religious distinction, recall the ghettos of Eastern Europe.

*In impressive contrast is the influence of the land itself, especially on that large part of the Israeli-born generation which has been brought up to a life of agriculture on the kibbutzim (collective farms). These sun-tanned young Israelis are working in the fields at Kibbutz Geirim in the Western Negev.*

*Evening Standard*



*Kibbutz Afikim in the Jordan valley, three miles to the south of the Sea of Galilee, is typical of the more prosperous and long-established kibbutzim. Founded in the early 1930s, it not only comprises a large, thriving farm but has developed into a small town with a plywood factory. The water-tower, the landmark of every settlement in Israel, can be seen on the left; in the background are the trans-Jordanian mountains*

*Zeven Hayesod*





Keren Ha

A group of children in Kibbutz Tirat Zvi which, in its variety of physical types, reflects the varied racial origins of the sabras' parents. Many of them are fair-headed and blue-eyed, with features unlike those which other races in the lands of exile were accustomed to regard as characteristic of the Jews



IJlem van de Poll, from Daybreak for a Nation (J. A. Boom & Zoon)

In junior schools and homes for infants the young children of immigrants, despite their different backgrounds, quickly learn to live together and understand one another. Life in Israel is enriched by the diversity of their cultural heritage: for example by the folk-dances of Slavonic or Central European derivation which, learnt at school, attain national popularity

*Being a small country not plentifully endowed with natural resources, Israel must find her assets in the craftsmanship and skill of her people. At the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the Weizmann Institute in Rehovot and numerous technical schools, young Israelis are being trained in technical and scientific occupations. Here some of them are being taught the craft of watchmaking at a vocational school in Jerusalem*

*Keren Hay*





From our photo from Israel's Defense Forces. J.A. Baum © 1968

A young girl who embodies the spirit of the sabras. As her uniform and equipment indicate, she is undergoing pre-military training. In general Israeli girls enjoy an unusual degree of equality with their brothers, most of all in the army: side by side with them they are prepared to defend their country.

kibbutz as a kind of idyll. It is evident that young people in such a communal farm are subject to pressures and emotional strains, and have their serious problems and crises just like young people anywhere else in the world. I have told, however, the story of this kibbutz in some detail as an illustration of the human qualities of the new Jewish generation in Israel. It is clear that without a deep feeling of common purpose, without a highly developed sense of comradeship and devotion, without an ability to work hard, toughness and a strong character, the existence of these kibbutzim would not have been possible. And there are dozens of such settlements established by the sabras since the state of Israel came into existence. They can be found in all parts of the country—in the thirsty sands of the Negev and in the hills of Judea round Jerusalem, in the Jordan valley, and in the mountains of Upper Galilee. Thus the sabras, the sons of Jewish merchants and intellectuals, city-dwellers for many generations, have turned into farmers. And they are good farmers: they have developed a love for the soil, for the cattle; they have a feeling for agricultural machinery, for the most modern improvements in farming.

However, the sabras are not only good farmers. The majority of them live, of course, in town. They are workers, officials, independent craftsmen, students, etc. But in every field they display their distinctive qualities: they are extremely independent in character, by European standards somewhat rough and tough, lacking in outward polish and manners, but at the same time sincere, straightforward and persistent. A girl sabra has little of the feeling of belonging to the 'weaker sex' that is so often evident in a European girl. She is usually self-assured, very proud, speaking to boys as to equals—but at the same time she is rather impulsive and romantic. The sabra lacks the sharp speculative mind, the cosmopolitan intellectual interests, the quick responsiveness, the extrovert vitality, the talkativeness and gesticulation which was so characteristic of his ancestors in the dispersal, who lived mainly in Eastern Europe. The sabras in general, and the farmers and soldiers among them in particular, are a bit heavy, not very out-

spoken, collected, slower in response.

Though many of the sabras are brilliant intellectuals of great promise, and a whole gallery of young Israeli-born writers, actors and scientists has already appeared, many of their teachers, as well as leading personalities of the older generation, consider it to be a fact that, on the average, a sabra is not so intellectually gifted and does not have the same intensive drive for the spiritual as did the non-Israeli-born Jews. Yigal, one of my friends, was a son of well-to-do parents in Ramat Gan near Tel-Aviv, the Israeli equivalent of Hampstead. The ambition of his parents was that he should study at Jerusalem University and become a lawyer or a doctor. Yigal, however, though quite a good pupil at his secondary school, was not interested in further study. Though still young, he already wanted to establish himself in his own business, and be independent of his parents. Together with a friend, he opened a garage and an engineering workshop. He enjoyed himself working with machinery, as he had considerable mechanical skill. Nothing in the world would persuade him to abandon his workshop and go to study at the university. Another friend of mine took up farming in much the same way. Such behaviour is quite common among the sabras, though of course there are also many cases where those who want to study cannot do so for lack of means or for other reasons.

That, then, is the story of the new Israeli-born generation: young, dynamic and tough and now rising to maturity. The older generation of leaders, veterans of the Zionist movement, born in the lands of exile outside Israel, is already giving way to the Israeli-born. The former Israeli Commander-in-Chief, Moshe Dayan, as well as a number of Ministers and other important personalities are members of this new generation. There can be no doubt that as years go on the sabras, born and bred in Israel, will control the destinies of their country. One can only hope that being themselves 'sons of the Middle East' by birth and upbringing they will find more readiness on the part of their Arab neighbours to recognize them and to arrive with them at a peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Arab conflict.



# Spring in the Mountains

by CHARLES EVANS

*A climber sees spring in the mountains with a special eye: this is the view given us by the leader of the successful assault on Kangchenjunga in 1955 (described, with twelve colour-plates, in our January 1956 number). He has been seven times to the Himalayas and was Sir John Hunt's deputy leader on the 1953 Everest Expedition, when he and Bourdillon reached Everest's southern summit*

ON British hills we are accustomed to unseasonable weather, and it is common to enjoy, or to have to put up with, days which seem properly to belong to a quite different time of year. In Wales I have climbed in August in a snowstorm, in June in an icy gale of wind and rain, and in January and February on mild sunny days when only the snowdrops and the absence of songbirds told me that it was not already spring; and at the beginning of March 1957 the sun was so hot that, on a rock-climb in Central Wales, we could bask on the ledges in shirt-sleeves where a day later, in mist and rain, it was difficult to keep even moderately warm.

Each of our seasons, nevertheless, has days of a kind which are distinctive to it, and the ones which I think of as characteristic of spring in our mountains are those when we walk up from valleys to which spring has already come, to look for snow-climbing, or for skiing, on ground that is still in the grip of winter.

I remember starting for one such April day's climbing by travelling to the mountains overnight, and walking up in the dawn through a wooded valley; on every side as I walked the woods were filled with the song of the willow-wren. This bird, and the cuckoo, and the lapwing, are found below the moor and the mountain; on higher ground the notable bird in spring is the curlew, whose voice, loud and sweet, seems always to speak of loneliness and of far places.

On a fine April day, when the air is clear and there is snow on the tops, our small hills seem to be giants, and it is then that the mountaineer is most likely to find snow and ice in good condition for climbing. In winter, freshly fallen snow often covers the hills, but such snow, good though it is to look at, is not very good to climb on, because it is often wet and soft. Towards Easter, the snow that still remains has been packed down, and hardened by successive thawings and re-freezings; days are then longer than in winter, and it is often possible to climb on first-class snow in bright sunshine. Snow like this can make wholly

delightful an expedition which without it would be no more than a trudge, but snow early in the year can also turn an easy, harmless mountain into a place full of traps, occasionally because it thaws and falls as an avalanche, more commonly because its surface becomes glazed with ice.

Two years ago, with a friend, I climbed one of the gullies of Snowdon in such conditions. It was a clear, fine day, and the snow in the gully was frozen hard. By the time we reached the top of the mountain the snow had softened slightly, and instead of cutting steps with the ice-axe we could get along by kicking into the slope with our boots. We decided that, as we were now going faster, we would, instead of taking the easiest way, come down a gully rather like the one we had climbed, Great Gully. For several hundred feet we kicked our heels into snow that was firm, but not too hard, and late in the afternoon reached a big boulder jammed between the vertical rocky walls of the gully; this was the lowest obstacle in the gully, and after climbing down over it, we took off the rope. Below us was a smooth slope of snow which, at the bottom of the gully, now only some fifty yards beneath us, joined a wide snow-field. There the angle was less steep than in the gully, and the slope was broken by a succession of small bluffs until, perhaps two hundred yards lower than the bottom of the gully, it ended at the edge of a broken cliff about five hundred feet high.

After unroping, we decided to 'glissade' the lowest part of the gully, that is, to go down by a deliberate and controlled slide, standing upright, rather as if we were using our boots as skis. My companion started, but when he had gone a couple of yards his feet shot from under him and, flat on his back, he slid with alarming speed towards the slope below the gully. This was evidently steeper than it had looked from above and the surface of the snow, like that in the lowest part of the gully, had for an hour or two been in shadow, and was sheeted with ice. His pace unchecked, he shot into the air as he passed over one of



B. R. Goodfellow

*"On a fine April day, when there is snow on the tops, our small hills seem to be giants." The Snowdon group from the south-east*

the bluffs which broke up the slope, and disappeared in the direction of the bigger cliff below. Certain that he was badly hurt, if not killed, I cut steps very carefully all the way down, and could hardly believe my eyes when I found him safe on a ledge above the brink. His ice-axe had been torn from his grasp as he slid, but somehow he had been able to check the slide with elbows and hands as he passed over the rocks, and he was only bruised.

To the careless, the Welsh hills can be dangerous in spring; the Scottish hills, because they are higher and bigger, can be even more so. They can also be most attractive: low down, birches are in leaf and primroses in flower; high up, where the crags and ridges are on a bigger scale than in Wales, there is excellent climbing on snow and on ice, and in the high corries there is skiing as late as May, when the snow, though limited in amount, may be first-rate in quality.

To think of spring skiing is to think of glacier skiing and of ski-mountaineering in the Alps. On my first visit there in April, the season, when we arrived, might have been mid-winter: there were no views, the valleys were covered with grey cloud, and on the mountains snow was falling. We took a lift in a *téléférique* to a chalet at about 6000 feet, where we intended to stay. The chalet was a two-storeyed stone house, half-an-hour's walk from the snout of a small glacier; clouds hung about during much of the day, and all around were snow-drifts; the highest trees were not far below.

The small glacier, which was gently sloping and not much broken, was deeply covered with snow which, at this season, was in condition for only a short half-hour each morning, when the icy crust which had formed overnight was softened by the sun. Our days were not much varied: the toil was long, and sometimes tedious; the reward was brief, but great—snow so easy that even a beginner, as I was, could ski down blissfully in splendid surroundings.

We used to start early as a rule and put on the skis at the edge of the glacier in the faint light before dawn. Before the sun touched us we had usually reached the upper part of the glacier, for this was a deep valley, and the sun came into it late. We would then wait for the sun to get to work on the snow and make it ready for the run down, in the meantime either climbing a little farther up the glacier, or sitting on a boulder to eat our breakfast and to wax our skis.

Sometimes we started late and skied down

from half-way up the glacier; sometimes we started earlier and reached the col at its head, from which we could look at the great south face of Mont Blanc in its winter coat of snow, whiter than I had ever seen it; and once we were early enough to climb a tributary glacier, from which, leaving our skis at a col, we followed a snowy ridge to the top of a mountain. The crest of the ridge was narrow, the snow not very firm, and we had one ice-axe between three. In our clumsy ski-boots we had to go very carefully until one by one we could stand on the top.

How different it was from being on an Alpine peak in summer! We were comparatively low and could see clearly the villages in the valley; instead of the expanse of brown rubble and faded grass that one sees in August from a mountain-top we saw fresh green pastures below the snow; and the snow itself, not much broken by rocks and crevasses, looked deep and untouched.

That holiday gave me a new notion of spring in the high Alps, and now the phrase does not call to my mind a vision of meadows carpeted with spring flowers, or of herds of cows making their way to the high pastures; my pictures are of silhouettes of summits unusually white against the blue sky, of trees no longer snow-mantled but dark and spear-like against a white background, of an old guide squirting red wine from a skin into the back of his throat, of the scented woods below the hut in afternoon sunshine, siesta time, and most clear of all, of three figures descending a glacier in a series of rushes interrupted by violent falls, rushes short, but so good that while they lasted it seemed that life was made only so that a man might enjoy them.

In the Himalaya, spring in the sense of the renewal, after winter, of active growing life, extends over several months, and the time at which it comes to any particular place depends mainly on height above sea-level. The lower valleys, only a few hundred feet above the sea, are semi-tropical, while the summits are beyond the snow-line; between these extremes the traveller can nearly always find, from February to July, some place to which spring, in this sense, has only now come; and he can, as it were, put the clock forward or backward by climbing down or up. Moreover, he can, if he likes, choose his climate and stay in it, as do the Nepalese shepherds with their flocks and, in a slightly different way, the Sherpas who, with their yaks, move *en masse* to and from the higher pastures and the higher arable land.

The climber going to the mountains of

*"Spring in the high Alps . . . silhouettes of summits white against the blue sky . . . trees no longer snow-mantled but dark and spear-like against a white background."* Near Villars, Canton de Vaud

J. Allan





Potunin

*In the Himalayan spring "the rhododendron is the characteristic sight by the way and makes the loveliest foreground for a view of the distant snows"*

Nepal, who leaves the plains early in March, walks most of the way to the mountains in what seem to be spring conditions. As soon as he has left the plains, where at all seasons the country has something of the look of a faded summer, he begins to climb, and at about 8000 feet he reaches the rhododendron belt. These trees are abundant, but theirs are by no means the only flowers to be seen; at this season the magnolias are in flower and the large white waxy flowers show well against the dull green jungle background; orchids, too, are common even in spring and their sprays hang by the track from clefts in rocks and in old trees. Nevertheless, the rhododendron is the characteristic sight by the way, and a forty-foot tree, thick with scarlet blooms, makes the loveliest foreground that I have seen for a view of the distant snows. The beauty of the rhododendron is due partly to its flowers and partly to its bark. The trunks are smooth and sinuous, and in sunshine, against a background of winter snow-drift, they have a dull reddish colour. Unfortunately, though so pleasing to the eye, untracked rhododendron forest is extremely dense; and I remember one sunny April day when two of us, having reached a mountain lake by crawling along a tributary stream under a tunnel of arching branches, set about looking for a trail in the forest. Our plan was to leave the lake at a certain point and to search along a straight line directly away from the shore. We went in opposite directions, but after two hours of work we could still converse, so slow was our advance.

Early on the way, the track to the mountains is sure to cross a number of high ridges, from one of which the climber will sooner or later have a memorable view. I went first to Sola Khombu in 1952, and then we saw Everest from a ridge near the village of Okhaldunga, at about 10,000 feet; it was one of the greatest thrills that I have ever had. In the early morning we could see the mountains clear above a brownish dusty haze. In spring the air is not generally so clear as in autumn, and by nine o'clock, as is the rule at this time of year, the haze had thickened and the mountains were hidden.

This first fleeting glimpse is tremendously

exhilarating: the distant range seems as remote as a part of another world, but the climber knows that before long he will set foot on it; something of the spirit of spring enters his heart, and before him he sees a summer of discovery and achievement.

The approach in spring is lovely and stimulating; it can also be difficult. Last year, going to the Annapurna range in April, we found that there had been an exceptional winter snowfall which, when the temperature rose in March, had resulted in a series of enormous avalanches. Our barefoot porters had to struggle through widespread drifts of snow in forests as low down as 10,000 feet; and here, in places, we found that the avalanches had destroyed many square miles of woodland, either uprooting trees or cutting them off clean a dozen feet above the ground.

To the highest valleys the change of seasons comes in May or June. In April, the climber who puts his base camp at 16,000 feet finds the pastures there under snow; fresh snow falls each afternoon, and the herdsmen's huts are empty. A month later, coming back to the same camp, he finds that a transformation has taken place: the snow has gone, and by the banks of the streams, which on the pastures are small and clear, the primulas are in flower. On every side there are signs of life: the yak-men have brought up their herds, and wild animals also, sheep and goats, have moved up to their summer grazing grounds. The climber who has come down from the bleak winter of a high camp feels the contrast intensely. He visits the herdsmen and enjoys fresh butter and curds; he potters on the banks of a stream, discovering for himself the colours of the primulas and of the variegated pebbles on the stream-bed; he strays from camp to the slopes above, now coloured mauve by the smallest of the dwarf rhododendrons, and searches the mountain-sides for a sight of the noisy partridge-like Snow Cock and its chicks, and of the fawn-coloured wild sheep and the chestnut-coated Himalayan goat; he feels that he has stepped from the land of death into life, and the miracle of spring, which in other places is more easily ignored, here fills him with wonder.

# Wild Flowers of the Pyrenees

by DAVID PATON

LEAVING London one April morning, only twenty-four hours later I was wandering in the sunny mountain pastures of the Pyrenees. With its friendly people and diverse scenery, here is the ideal mountain region for a holiday; a region which, as yet, is comparatively unspoiled.

The great range is of exceptional botanical interest. Stretching as it does for about 250 miles from the Bay of Biscay in the west to the Mediterranean in the east, it separates the fertile wooded countryside of France from the sun-baked arid land of Spain, forming the common meeting-ground of four distinct types of flora: those of North-West Europe, of the Iberian peninsula, of the Mediterranean and, above a certain height, of the Alps.

There are numerous plants common to the Pyrenees and the Alps, though the mountain flora of the former range is by no means limited to these. In fact it has a particularly rich flora, with many endemic species. In some ways, however, there is a closer relationship between the flowers of the Pyrenees and those of the Balkan mountains. These two ranges are at a similar latitude and of similar average height, sharing a much longer growing-season and smaller variation of temperature than are found in the great Alpine chain. Moreover, in winter the climate of the Pyrenees and Balkans is governed by depressions along the Mediterranean front, that of the Alps by the polar continental air mass. Thus, as might be expected, we find flowers common to the Pyrenees and Balkans which are missing from the Alps. An interesting example of this, illustrated here, is *Ramonda pyrenaica*. Spain being so near, it is natural that those plants of the Iberian peninsula which are not indigenous to North-West Europe should spread from the south into the Pyrenees, and a similar diffusion of Mediterranean plants from the east also takes place.

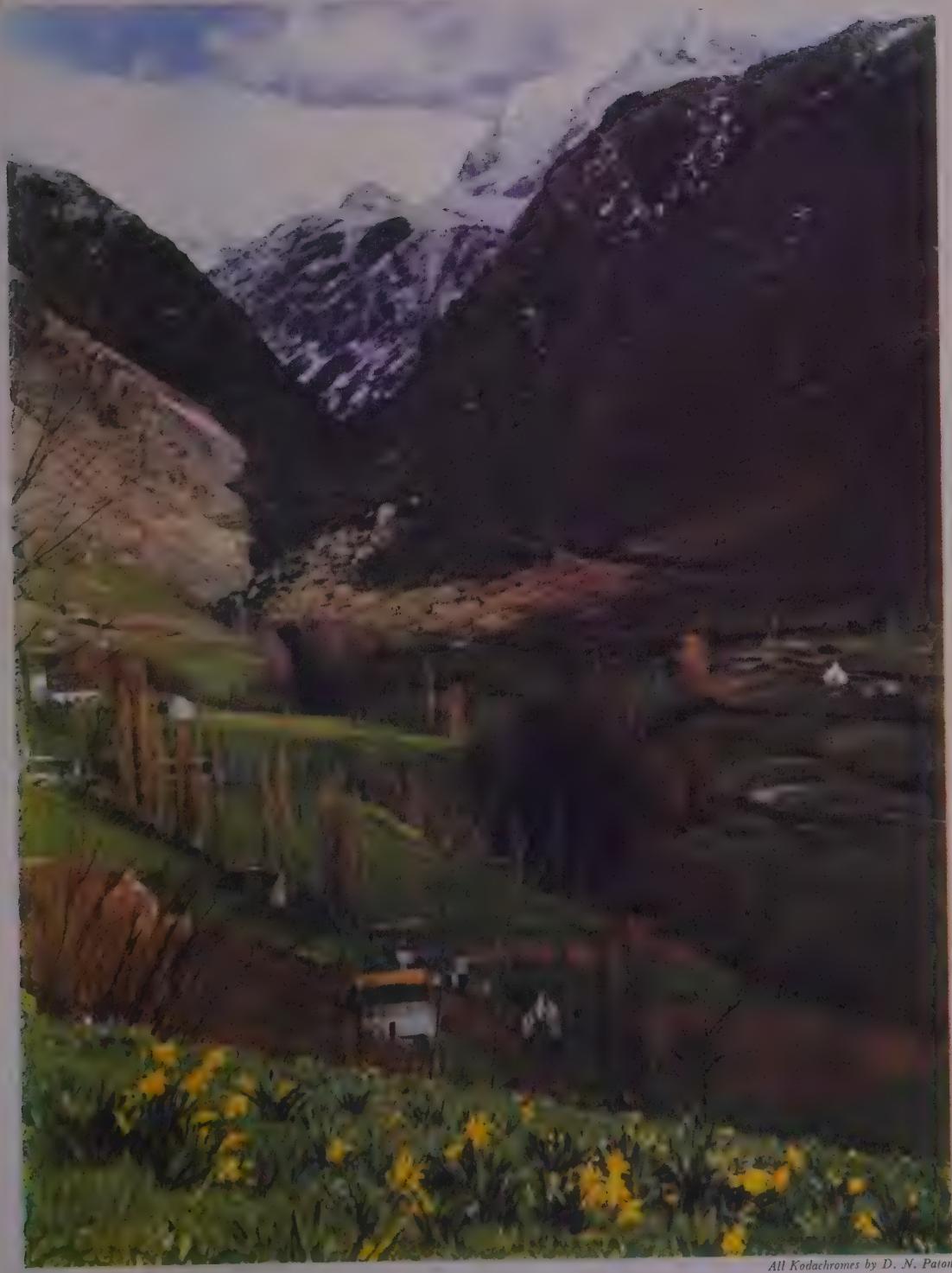
One can hardly, therefore, wander for long among the Pyrenean flowers without speculating on the past and future history of each different plant, and especially on the fascinating problem of endemism. Why should a particular flower live only in this one area?

It must be remembered that with the majority of Alpine flowers only a bare indication of the time and height of flowering can be given. If the plant tolerates a wide range of height, it usually has a long flowering-season, for the higher it grows the later it is in flower. The time of flowering is also affected by the aspect of the terrain, being normally later at the same height on the north-facing than on the south-facing slopes of the same range.

There are plants which, due to the great height at which they grow, are severely limited in flowering-time on account of the extremely short growing-season at such heights. On the other hand, consider such a plant as *Gentiana verna*. Here is a flower of mountain pastures distributed widely in northern Europe and Asia which tolerates an enormous range of height. I have seen it growing at sea-level in the west of Ireland, while it has been found as high as 10,000 feet in the Alps. In the Pyrenees, at the height of the Heas valley (rising from 3500 feet), it flowers in abundance in April, and this is the month which is normally regarded as its flowering-time. But I have found plants still flowering at the beginning of August towards the tops of the passes. These, then, are the extremes; in the majority of cases we might expect a variation of at least two months according to the situation and aspect.

One of the most interesting and best-known valleys of the Central Pyrenees runs upwards from Lourdes for about thirty miles, and terminates in the magnificent Cirque de Gavarnie. I first explored this valley one sunny April, and was richly rewarded by the flowers I found.

From the bustling, crowded town of Lourdes, the broad valley only hints at glories to come, and a branch railway quickly conveyed us some twelve miles through blossom-covered farmlands to Pierrefitte. This is a delightful centre. It is at no great height above sea-level, yet the mountains close right in, and two typical steep-sided valleys join. On some of the grassy slopes I was interested to find a scrub of white woolly-flowered shrubs, while, hiding in the bare thickets, were the lovely blue flowers of *Anemone hepatica*. This flower early—in March and April—and in growth and



All Kodachromes by D. N. Paton

Narcissi in the Heas valley, near Gavarnie on the French side of the Central Pyrenees. Rising from about 3500 feet, the cultivated and wooded lower slopes merge higher up into rocks, snow and ice

*Gentiana verna* growing in the Heas valley, in the same field as the narcissi in the previous plate.  
In April the mountain pastures are covered with sheets of its vivid blue. It is found at a variety of  
heights, nearly always in moist turf on limestone. It is a native of Britain, though there very rare





Anemone hepatica is commonly found on limestone in woodlands at low to medium heights of the Alps and Pyrenees, where it flowers in early spring. Its hairy, club-shaped leaves are characteristic, but the flowers may adopt any shade from deep blue to white; they may also be tinged with purple or pink.





Opposite, top) *Cochlearia pyrenaica*, photographed in August half-way up the Tourmalet Pass at about 5000 feet. Akin to the cress family, it is found occasionally in Austria too.

(Opposite, bottom) *Sedum dasyphyllum*, photographed also in August at 6000 feet on the Col de Peyresourde. A lover of dry, stony places, it stores moisture in its globular leaves. It is sometimes found growing on walls in Britain.

Above) *Ramonda pyrenaica* is a native of the Pyrenees. It prefers a vertical cliff at about 5000 feet, damp and shaded from excessive sunshine. The rosettes of the crinkly, hairy leaves crowd the rock-crevices which anchor its roots.

Right) Another plant that is endemic to the Pyrenees is *Aquilegia pyrenaica* which likes similar conditions, but grows slightly higher than *Ramonda pyrenaica*. It was photographed at 6000 feet, on the way to the Spanish frontier.



*Primula hirsuta*, growing in the Heas valley on the site of a great landslide. In April, when the author found it, this was the only specimen in flower though the rocks were covered with its foliage. *Primula hirsuta* is common in both the Alps and the Pyrenees, where it flowers usually between May and July on siliceous rocks at about 5000 feet or higher





*Hypericum nummularium* is a delicate plant of the family of St John's Worts, most of which have flowers with five yellow petals and distinctive bundles of stamens. This one has long creeping stems and smooth leaves. It is not common in the Pyrenees, and less so in the Alps. In flower from June to August, its normal habitat is on limestone, up to 7000 feet



(Above) *Merendera pyrenaica* is an uncommon bulbous plant which grows on grassy slopes of the Pyrenees at heights up to 8000 feet, though this plant was photographed in August, at about 5000 feet high above the Cirque de Gavarnie. (Left) *Galeopsis pyrenaica* belongs to the mint family. Also endemic to the Pyrenees, it is the highest-growing of all the flowers illustrated here. It was found by the author, in August, at nearly 8000 feet on the Spanish frontier

habit resembles our native wood anemone. It is frequently cultivated in Britain under the name "Hepatica", where, as in its natural state, lime and shade are its essential requirements.

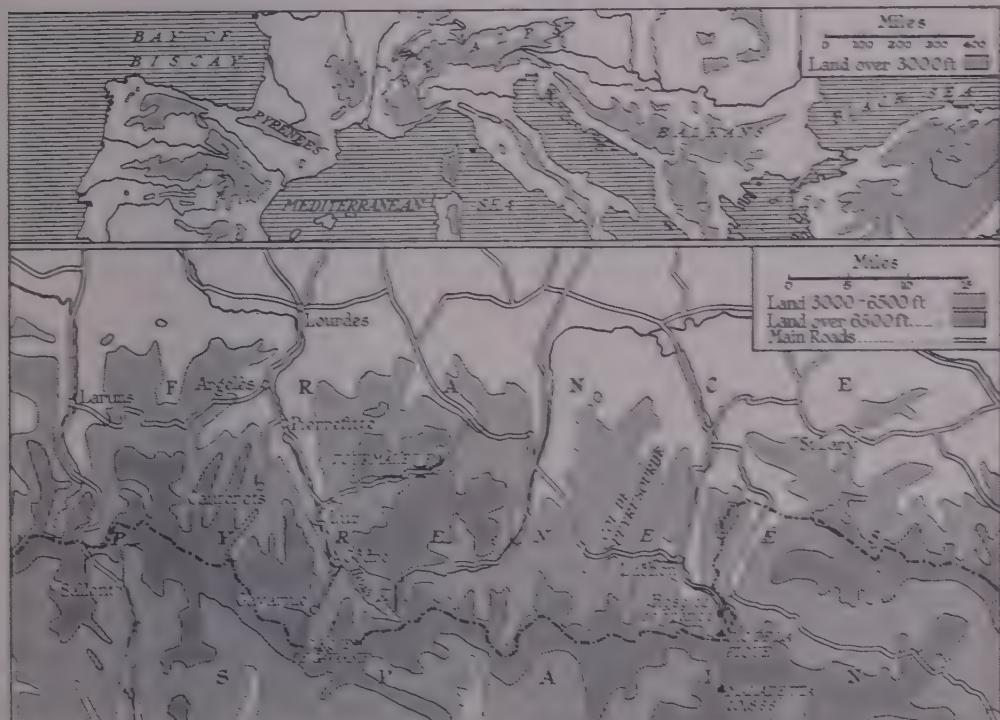
From Pierrefitte, the road ascends a steep gorge for about seven miles until the small town of Luz is reached. This is an important road-junction in summer, for, turning off to the north-east, is the beginning of the Tourmalet Pass, which rises to some 7000 feet. One August I found the little *Cochlearia pyrenaica* growing in a wet grassy swamp beside this road. It is closely related to the British Scurvy-Grass, and akin to the cress family.

After Luz the road steepens and leads through another gorge for about six miles to Gèdre. Here, at 3500 feet, the snow-capped mountains become increasingly more impressive as they tower above you on all sides. Due to the steepness of the valleys, however, it is still necessary to do some climbing in order to see the highest peaks. To the south-east runs the Heas valley, where in April I came upon the particularly interesting field which forms the subject of the first accompanying colour-plate. It was richly alkaline, for at the top were banks of *Gentiana verna*

flowering in the brilliant sunshine. In addition to the bright yellow narcissi, I was also delighted to find the unopened heads of an endemic fritillary.

In the Heas valley, just before the road in the picture disappears from view, a great landslide can be seen to have occurred. I was exploring this stony locality on the following day when I was fortunate in seeing far above me one tiny speck of pink. It proved to be an early flower of *Primula hirsuta*. Though the rocks were covered with foliage, I could only find this one plant in flower; and the task of photographing it was a matter of some difficulty on account of the steepness of the rocks and the plant's position on them. I had no choice, but I could hardly have wished for a finer specimen, with the superb colouring of its pink corollas and their pale yellow throats. (Beside the same road, in August, I photographed the delicate small creeping *Hypericum* illustrated opposite the *Primula*.)

Above Gèdre are lofty precipices, and covering some of the more shaded faces I found the distinctive leaves of *Ramonda pyrenaica*. As I had never previously seen the plant in its natural habitat, I longed to find



A. J. Thorndale

one in flower. But though some flowering stems were just in evidence, I was reluctantly forced to abandon the search, vowing, of course, to return at a later date.

Another five miles south of Gèdre lies Gavarnie, at the foot of perhaps the most famous natural amphitheatre in the world. The whole of the highest mountain ridge, which here divides France from Spain, appears to have been scooped out into a semicircular basin of breath-taking proportions. At that time Gavarnie and all above it was covered in snow, so that the sight was formidable indeed. But when I revisited it in August, it was possible to climb up around the basin over grassy flower-covered slopes, and here I suddenly caught sight of the starry heads of *Merendera pyrenaica* among the turf.

Many of my happiest recollections are centred around the Hospice de France. This splendid hostelry, in winter a ski-resort, is situated at about 4000 feet near Luchon. It can be reached by car after a seemingly interminable climb. At first the way lies through steep wooded valleys, but, as we ascended, the trees gradually began to thin out and the road steepened until at last, with great relief, we reached the mountain basin in which the hotel is situated. It is only then that the grandeur of the scene can be appreciated. Towering above on three sides are enormous mountain slopes and precipices, some soft and grassy, others bleak and forbidding. Dominating these is the strikingly pointed Pic de la Pique. On the fourth side the eye can wander back over countless peaks to the lowlands beyond.

We decided one August day to climb about 4000 feet to the Spanish frontier, circle round behind the Pic de la Pique, and then return to the Hospice by a different route. We started early, through grassy swards gay with violet and pink flowers, and the first part of the route entailed climbing about 2000 feet up out of the basin. Surrounding us on both sides were great precipices, and it was on one of these black faces that I found the endemic *Aquilegia pyrenaica* illustrated herewith. I well remember the thrill of finding this plant for the first time. I was approaching a massive wet and shaded part of the wall, when, quite unexpectedly, my eye lit upon a portion studded with blue. On closer inspection I was rewarded by seeing a small aquilegia, about five inches high, with the most exquisitely coloured blue heads. This caused considerable excitement and much delay on account of the photography. In fact it was not until

a second visit that I was able to obtain the accompanying photograph, on account of the difficulty of reaching any of the plants.

Higher up, the way steepened and narrowed, with frequent crossings of the water-course where, all around, the wet rocks were draped with great banks of white-flowered saxifrage. After reaching the top, we found ourselves in yet another basin, but of a much longer and more barren kind than before. Great mountain lakes fed by melting glaciers were fringed with turf ablaze with the blue of the gentians. All around were the highest ridges and peaks, wet and glistening in the sunshine. Ahead, though yet invisible, lay the cleft in the rocks which was the summit of our pass into Spain. This we reached after another two hours' climb across the loose rock, and it was close to the top that I found the delicate little plants of *Galeopsis pyrenaica*—another Pyrenean endemic.

From the summit of the pass we were greeted with a view into Spain of indescribable grandeur. In front lay the Maladetta, the highest mountain of the Pyrenean chain, harsh, barren and covered with snow like the icing of a cake. Below, the steep-sided valley wandered lazily into the heat-haze of Spain. Two horses were the only other living things to break the solitude.

After walking for two more hours, we crossed another pass to bring us back again. It was then that the trouble began. The way became steeper and steeper, until eventually we found ourselves on a shoulder overlooking an enormous valley. It became increasingly difficult to descend, and the heat was stifling. But descend we must, and finally we were forced to scramble down a watercourse, so thick was the undergrowth in which we had become entangled.

The first human being we met was apparently incapable of understanding my few words of imperfect French; by dint of signs, however, we discovered that there was a path which led to a hut further on. No wonder my French was no good—we were in Spain!

But night was falling, and to return would be impossible. The clouds were heavy and threatening thunder. No matter; the good peasants at the first habitation we found gladly let us sleep in a barn; below us in it and unaware of our presence were the Spanish frontier guards! Early next morning, after breakfasting on cheese and wine, we escaped back across the frontier into France, where we received a warm welcome from all at the Hospice.

# Copenhagen: Open-handed City

by GRAEME SHANKLAND

*The author is an architect and town-planner and his work at the L.C.C. involves the supervision of its large urban redevelopment and reconstruction schemes in South London. He has travelled widely in Europe to see what comparable civic planning is being done in other countries. This is the second of two articles dealing with Denmark's achievement: the first, published in our March number, described the national background*

Seven green spines,  
A mermaid and waterways,  
Supported by suburbs  
Like an old dame on new stays.

J. Olsen

THE sites men choose for their cities sometimes remind me of those chosen by animals. Stockholm is a spider at the centre of the network of its archipelago. Copenhagen is a cormorant poised, staring across the narrow sound separating it from the Swedish shore; perched, like Gibraltar, at the junction of two seas. Every ship bound to or from the Baltic, until 1857, had to pay the Danish Crown for the privilege of passing through this sound.

"We call ours the last city in Europe: Asia begins at Malmö" said one of its citizens, with more than an echo of proud irony. It would be more truthful to say that Copenhagen is still in many ways the capital of Scandinavia. Though outstripped in recent years in prosperity and the speed of its expansion by Stockholm, it is the oldest and most mature of Scandinavia's cities.

A Swedish businessman will set off for Copenhagen with much the same spirit and intention as his English equivalent making for Paris. I ran into several parties of Norwegian students. "I suppose they have come to celebrate after taking their exams?" I queried. "Not exactly," was the reply, "they come every year just before their exams."

Besides being a tonic for tourists, the city of



Copenhagen with its region holds more than a quarter of the total Danish population of 4,500,000. The city's name means "merchants' harbour" and it has prospered with its port. Free of both tides and ice and sited in the centre of the commerce of northern Europe, the harbour long ago became the chief port in Scandinavia and the centre of Baltic trade. It still is.

With one eye on the new Kiel Canal, the Danes opened the capital's Free Port in 1894 and have since three times extended it. Today over half the tonnage of ships calling comes from foreign ports. Although only the biggest port in a country where every considerable town is a seaport, most of the nation's tonnage is registered in Copenhagen which handles 61 per cent of the country's imports and 32 per cent of its exports. The Danes, always wide awake, are at the moment greatly extending Copenhagen's new port, Kastrup airport, chosen by S.A.S. (the airline corporation jointly owned by Sweden, Norway and Denmark) as its all-Scandinavian headquarters.

It is a working city in all respects. It contains most of Denmark's big industries and wholesale trade and 35 per cent of the people employed in them live there. Carlsberg and Tuborg, perhaps Denmark's most famous exports, were born in the capital. These huge breweries have an importance for the city greater even than that of Guinness for Dublin. Jacobsen, founder of the Carlsberg fortunes, bequeathed the whole enterprise to



*Eric Lom*

Copenhagen, "Merchants' harbour", handles two-thirds of Denmark's imports and a third of its exports.

Above Christianshavn, with its modern shipyards and old warehouses, was laid out in the 17th century.

Below Along the "Old Strand", once the waterfront of the mediaeval city, stretches the fish-market

*Alan Goss*



the Carlsberg Foundation which has financed a wide range of scientific work, from biochemistry to marine biology, and supports the museum of national history in the Frederiksborg Castle, just north of the city.

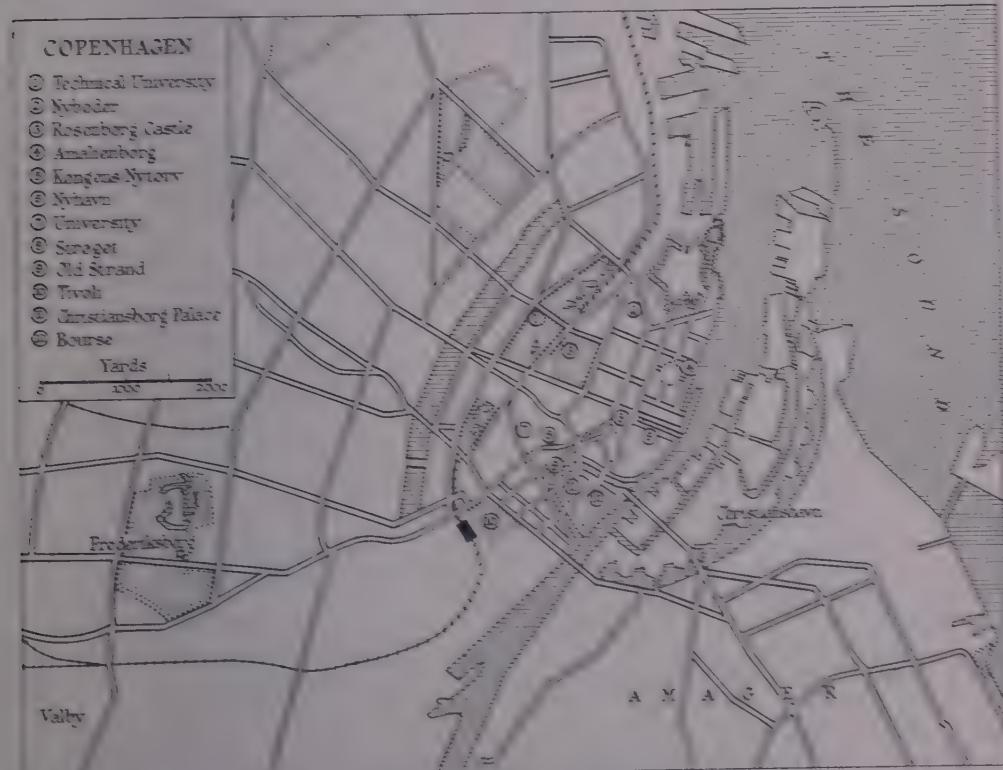
The Danes' enjoyment and appreciation of the good things of life has been more of a help than a hindrance to them. Most of their export industries are based on a discriminating home market. Most obvious in food and drink, this is true also of the products of horticulture, Danish fruit and vegetables. Cut flowers and plants are exported by air from Kastrup airport to a score of countries. Flowers sent daily also are those melting masterpieces of bakery, Danish cakes and pastries. The taste of almonds in these confections, says Sacheverell Sitwell again, will always remind one of Copenhagen.

Every city has its unique smell or taste, the bite and savour of which instantly evokes a memory. London, for me, is the warm dry breath of the tube; Prague, the smell of a Czech cigar; Dublin, the faint tang of peat. Copenhagen, it is this almond flavour and also the taste of the fresh Danish open sandwiches. You buy your two- or three-

shilling lunch-boxes at the baker's or at special kiosks in the squares of the city; four or six sandwiches piled with various mixtures in a creamy mild mayonnaise or with sliced meats and cunningly wrapped to be delivered intact to the mouth.

Such is the usual summer lunch, taken occasionally with lager or stout and eaten at twelve o'clock, for the Danes are early risers, eat a light breakfast, dine at six and have a late supper before going to bed. This lunch, eaten out of doors whenever possible, is typical for Copenhagen's workers in office, shop and factory and for her many students.

The capital is the main centre of the nation's university and higher education. Some 5000 students, over a third of whom are girls, attend one or other of the five faculties that make up Copenhagen University. Here they study Theology, Law, Medicine, Philosophy and Science for five to seven years. The four main branches of Engineering—chemical, mechanical (including naval architecture), constructional, and electrical—are taught at the Technical University, which now musters nearly 2000 students. Its degrees alone carry the coveted title of Civil Engineer.





The author

Many of Copenhagen's early 17th-century buildings owe their origin to Christian IV who, in addition to a port and naval base, built this special quarter, Nyboder, for the sailors and craftsmen of the Royal dockyard. Its trim houses are still occupied by naval men and their families

Copenhagen University, however, is a mediaeval foundation, and still houses some of its faculties and students in the old centre of the city and others of its faculties in 19th-century buildings nearby modelled, alas, on their redbrick English contemporaries. Its newest scientific faculties have been moved out to more ample sites in the parks.

Faced with the problem of university expansion, the Danes wisely chose in 1928 to found a second university, parallel in purpose and standards with Copenhagen's, at Aarhus, the capital of Jutland and Denmark's second city. This decision is typical of a country which attaches great value to the life and growth of its provincial towns. Despite the concentration of so much of the national wealth, work and homes in Copenhagen, the independence of the smaller cities and towns can be seen in their busy civic life. They also support the astonishing number of over 120 daily newspapers. Every small town with its surrounding villages has its own 'left' and 'right' dailies and usually four or five others besides. There are no mammoth national newspapers in the British sense.

The two largest dailies, *Politiken* (left-Liberal) and *Berlingske Tidende* (Conservative)

follow this same pattern, being in fact provincial papers for the Copenhagen region and drawing only 12 per cent of their readership from outside it. To its citizens, even the capital is a provincial city and much of its character and quality derives from just this combination of provincial and metropolitan life.

To those who live there, Copenhagen is a city of compact, closely related but distinct communities. These have formed, and are still forming and changing, around the different historical districts of the city partly as a result of natural growth and partly as the result of planning, reconstruction and expansion. As the city has grown over 800 years, outwards from its centre, each generation according to its own needs, cast in the mould of the current architectural thinking, has laid out new streets, parks and harbours and built its terraces and palaces. Today the life of these communities is vividly reflected in the different districts that have moulded and been moulded by them.

The tiny mediaeval city, barely a thousand yards across, which once held the whole population within its ramparts, is still the heart of the city, its "down town". Its narrow winding High Street, Stroget, is both an

exclusive shopping street and a popular promenade. Despite its big department stores and more expensive speciality shops for porcelain, silver, clothes, in spite of the traffic (the logical Germans turned it into a one-way street on the morning of the occupation and it has so remained), it retains a mediaeval atmosphere.

South of Strøget and parallel to it (in reality nothing is parallel in the old city) is the "Old Strand", the long open quay that once was the sea-front and still offers a home to the fish-market and the city's best fish-restaurants. Behind this are the antique-shops, hung with hundreds of copper kitchen utensils that served in Danish farm-houses and are now greatly in demand. North of Strøget lies the cathedral and the old univer-

sity quarter with its bookshops.

The next extensions to the town were of a dramatic nature and owe their origin to Christian IV, an autocrat with a passion for building and for the navy, whose coffers were well lined with the profits of Danish farming and the Sound tolls. By the year of his death in 1648 he had recast the city's fortifications, doubling the town's area, started the citadel at the northern entrance to the port, built a new naval base, and built the whole new fortress-town of Christianshavn on reclaimed land across the main waterway linking Copenhagen with the island of Amager.

Christianshavn, with its wide canals, fine warehouses and tall simple merchants' houses grouped round their quiet courtyards, is still

*Copenhagen's 18th-century extensions, laid out under Frederik V, include one of Europe's finest essays in rococo architecture and town-planning, its centre-piece being the Amalienborg square. Of four identical mansion-palaces, originally built for the nobility, one is the Royal residence*

*By courtesy of the Danish National Travel Association*





By courtesy of the Federation of Danish Industries

With almost no raw materials Denmark's industrial future lies increasingly in skilled specialization.  
(Above) The Disa Elektronik factory, Copenhagen. (Below) Danish open sandwiches in a Copenhagen shop-window. Danish food and drink exports are popular abroad because the Danes appreciate the best at home

The author



one of the most attractive parts of the city. Today it is the quarter of retired sea-captains, carpet-dealers, the Greenland dock, the old warehouses and offices of the East India Company and the modern machine-shops of Burmeister and Wain. Alongside and overlooking the ramparts and the wide moat is a model old people's colony of flats in the midst of which—an imaginative touch—a nursery school has been placed.

On the land to the north enclosed by the new fortifications, King Christian first built Nyboder, a special district for the sailors and craftsmen of the Royal dockyard. Many of these houses still stand and are occupied today by naval men and their families.

The first large formal essay in town design for extending the city took place when Kongens Nytorv (the King's New Square) was built just outside the old eastern gateway, uniting the mediaeval with the 17th- and 18th-century town. From a corner of it—out to the sea—runs the long canal of Nyhavn, bringing ships right into the centre of the city.

The brightly painted houses that line this canal contain the city's most oddly mixed community. It is a street of sailors' bars, dance-halls, hotels, ships' chandlers and

tattooists, famous and infamous with the navies and merchant navies of the world, while the upper floors form the expensive flats of Copenhagen's fashionable Bohemia.

Where Nyhavn joins Kongens Nytorv stands the Charlottenborg Palace. Planned and built by Frederik Gyldenløve the bastard of Christian V. the first of Denmark's line of absolute monarchs, it became the architectural prototype of the other palaces and town houses of the Copenhagen nobility and merchants throughout the 18th century. In its courtyard the summer visitor can witness, as I did, the delightful open-air performances of the Royal Opera and Ballet who perform on a simple stage the Baroque operas and ballets appropriate to the setting. In term-time Charlottenborg is a school, the home of the Royal Danish Academy where Denmark's painters, architects and sculptors are trained together under its single roof.

The most beautiful of all Copenhagen's districts is the Amalienborg, designed by Nicolai Eigtved in 1749 and largely completed—as it were in one stroke—by the time he died five years later. A small district of delicate and discreet grey-and-white Rococo mansion-palaces was formed into one subtle

*A class-room in Munkegårdsskolen, one of the newest schools in the Copenhagen suburbs. The Danish primary and secondary schools system is run by the state and the local authorities; the city maintains 115 schools with 125,000 pupils. Only 5 per cent of the children attend private schools*

*By courtesy of the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs*





*By courtesy of the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs*



The semi-detached house is virtually unknown in Denmark but many types of terrace-housing, never seen in Great Britain, are popular there.

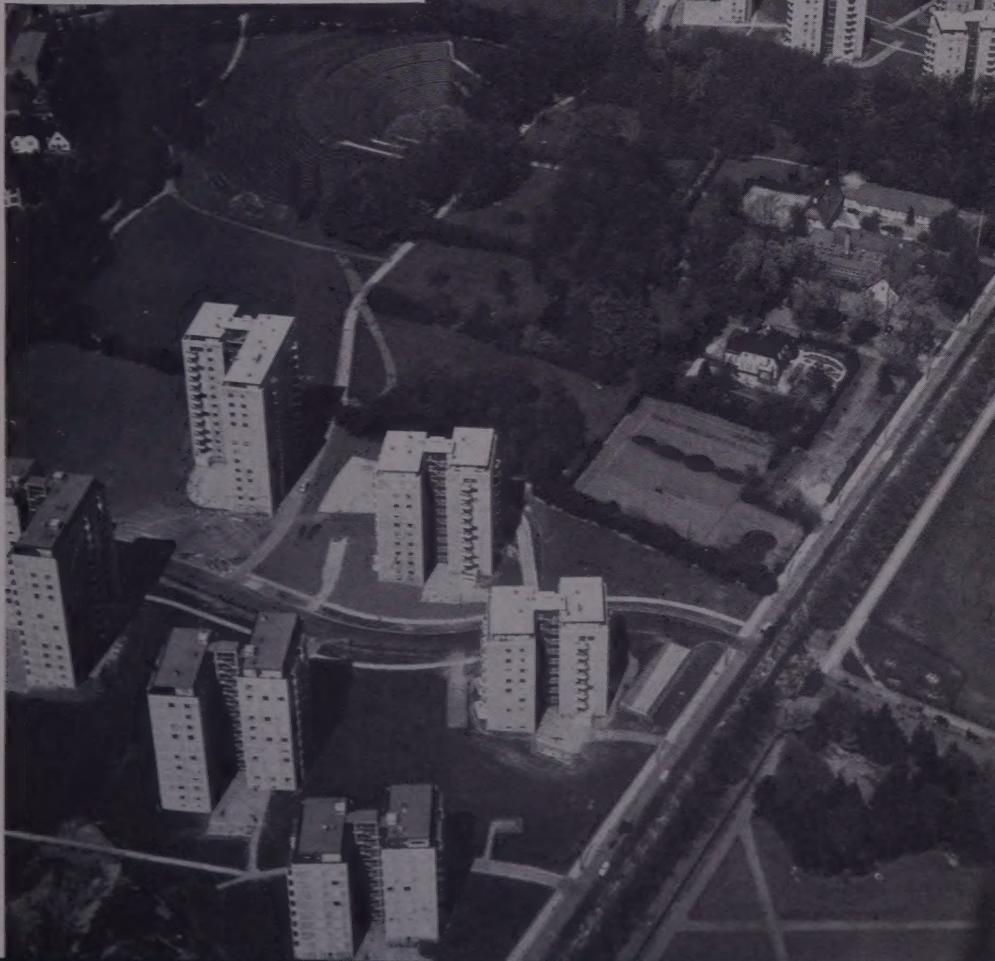
Above, 'Row homes' are often staggered in plan so that every family can enjoy a private corner of the communal garden where they take their meals in summer. Such 'open-air rooms', in the form of large, recessed balconies, are also a feature of almost all new blocks of flats. Each housing-estate has a children's playground. Left) Blocks of inexpensive service-flats are a feature of Danish housing. This one, built in 1950, is intended mainly for young couples both of whom work and for bachelors. Small children are catered for in its crèche and kindergarten. It also has its own restaurant, post-office, shop and reception, recreation and hobbies rooms



The author

*The Bellahøj estate is one of Copenhagen's bigger post-war flat-schemes. The blocks are set in a beautifully landscaped park (left) with a lake; and an open-air amphitheatre (below) has been built up with the excavated earth. The Danish townsman is primarily a flat-dweller: two-thirds of all the existing housing is in the form of flats*

*By courtesy of the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs*





Politikens Presse Foto

Copenhagen, the playground of Scandinavia, is the goal of these students from Oslo, who come before taking their exams to let off steam on the swings and roundabouts of the Tivoli

composition, equalled only in the world by that built at the same time by the Polish King Stanislaus at Nancy in France. It is still the most exclusive part of the old city.

At its centre is the octagonal 'square' formed by four mansions, the northern and southern pairs being linked by tall colonnades. This great square is like an intimate drawing-room, open to the sky. Looking east one glimpses the sea and the funnel of the Oslo boat; west along the other open side towers the massive Marble Church. The four mansions, almost identical outside, were

built for Danish noblemen, but when the Christiansborg Palace was burnt down in the fire of 1794 the King moved into one of them which continues to be used as the Royal home; another contains state apartments and the other two are used by the civil service.

By the middle of the 18th century the New Town had been completed and another ring of fortifications engulfing Christianshavn and the harbour had been thrown round the city, completing the circle. For the next hundred years the city remained within these walls and changed little in general appearance.

Two disastrous fires in 1728 and 1795 and Nelson's bombardment in 1807 destroyed between them the mediaeval city. The same kinds of houses were rebuilt—but this time with façades and windows in the refined Danish version of the neo-Classical style which had become popular after Eigtved's death and which today sets the character of a great part of Copenhagen.

The city in 1850 looked much as that part of it does today: a predominantly white-and-grey city, clean in the now smokeless air under a rich medley of tiled roofs. Only the seven copper spires break the skyline: the twisted dragon-tailed spire of Christian IV's Bourse, the fantastic spiral ramp of St Saviour's Church, the towers of the Christiansborg Palace and Rosenborg Castle and those of the other main churches.

This old city had remained within the ramparts since the beginning of the 17th century. By the mid-19th it had increased its population five-fold. Extra storeys had been added to the houses, their back gardens were filled up and their cellars crammed with families. Bathrooms were unknown and sewage ran in open drains in the streets. In 1853 cholera struck the city. The doctors, who had been agitating for years without success for better sanitation and less overcrowding, had been expecting this. They



(Above) The new concert-hall in the Tivoli gardens replaces that blown up by the Nazis as a reprisal for non-cooperation during the war. In addition to its symphony orchestra, Denmark supports four others.

(Below) The many restaurants in the Tivoli are a favourite resort of both office-workers and tourists

The au

J. Allan C



evacuated the most congested districts into tented towns outside the walls. The city had burst its banks.

A great argument followed about how the city's expansion should be planned. Beyond the fortifications lay a narrow green belt of land, preserved from building. Official plans and opinions favoured building grand boulevards lined with large blocks of dense monumental courtyard buildings, like the current scheme for Vienna.

Emil Hornemann, a young Danish doctor who with his colleagues of the Medical Association had already built a model settlement of low terraces and gardens, proposed that both the old fortifications and this green belt should be preserved as a park and that the new building should take place on cheap land further out where the city's workers could live with light and air and travel in by the new railways.

Considered revolutionary at the time, this wise proposal was rejected in favour of a more profitable compromise. Today most of the area of the fortifications, one of wide moats and banks and tree-lined walks, has been preserved as a continuous ring of parks, but across the green belt and beyond, in a wide arc round the landward side of the city, stretch acres of those tall dense courtyards which are still Copenhagen's main working-class districts and today its worst housing.

After this and following the expansion of the railway system, cheap fares and the development of the tram network, housing spread further inland, outwards from the city's centre. A whole new area of upper-class houses, flats and gardens grew up to the west around the palace and the park of Frederiksberg and this district now constitutes a separate municipality. In the present century, aided by the motor-car, the well-to-do sought and found homes and gardens northwards along the best bathing beaches, and the tide of building has splashed far beyond the old city.

The main problem facing Greater Copenhagen's planners now is how best to let the population expand from its present 1,200,000 to a maximum of 1,700,000. To solve this and the city's many other problems, they produced their famous "finger plan"—a city planned in the form of an open hand. While there is poetic justice in so hospitable a city having an open-handed plan, it derives not from poetry but from the firm reality of the centralized city as it now exists. Rejecting for that reason both a northwards-spreading linear city and the British concept of satellite new and expanded towns, they proposed to

extend the city outwards but compactly along the radial suburban railway-system. Westwards along these railway fingers and focused on the stations are the new suburban centres, threaded like rings on the fingers. None will be further away than forty-five minutes by train from the centre. New industrial areas will be sited on the railways between these centres and at the 'root' of the fingers where they join the main city and its outer ring road. Between the fingers themselves will stretch the city's fine system of parks and open spaces of which much has already been laid out. This plan, which has been accepted and is now being built, shows that the Danes think of their city as a benefit to be spread rather than an evil to restrict; a healthy rather than a malignant growth.

I end my story at "Tivoli", which can and should always be the summer visitor's last as well as his first impression of Copenhagen.

My hosts met my train and we walked straight into these gardens. Within less than the time it takes in London to get a taxi I was listening to a free concert in the new hall. Among the twenty acres of this ingenious and romantic garden conjured out of the old moat and ramparts are concealed twenty-one restaurants and cafés, two open-air theatres, a street of old shops, the great wheel, scenic railway and all the fair's sideshows. It is all conducted in an elegant mixture of *chinoiserie* pagodas and pavilions, Turkish-styled bazaars and divans: inside, everything from intimate cabaret to rock-and-roll; outside, jugglers and acrobats (the Danes have a passion for the circus); in its own theatre, Europe's last traditional *commedia dell'arte* pantomime; fireworks three times a week.

The spirit that invests this gay, urbane, cosmopolitan fantasy is contemporary, timeless and very Danish. Born in 1843 it is one of the country's oldest modern institutions. More than just an excellent family amusement park and fun-fair (which it is) it occupies a special place in Danish hearts. When the Nazis in a fit of fury at Danish non-cooperation blew up the Tivoli concert-hall, the compliment produced a sharp stiffening of Danish resistance.

"Tivoli" is typical of a practical people whose sense of proportion includes a sense of fun and of beauty and who in their moral and social life have always been more interested in contribution than in retribution. The Danes often grumble to themselves and their friends that they are too easy-going. May be; nevertheless they do "go". Where? It is idle to predict; but they seem to like the general direction and it can have no better recommendation.